

Recruiting Repeater Hosts

The fastest way to grow coverage is to recruit hosts for additional repeaters - people who will let you mount a node on their property. A good host needs to provide: height, power, and patience.

The ideal host profile

- Owns or has access to a high point (tower, tall building, hilltop property, water tower access)
- Has mains power available at or near the mount point (or accepts solar)
- Is comfortable with a small device mounted on their property for years
- Lives in an area that extends your coverage map

Where to find hosts

Amateur radio operators

Ham operators already have antenna infrastructure, understand RF concepts, and are culturally aligned with community communication projects. Local radio clubs are the first call for any mesh network builder. Many hams already have hilltop or tower access and are open to co-locating additional equipment.

Farmers and rural landowners

Rural property owners often want better communication options themselves. A repeater on a grain elevator, water tank, or farm outbuilding benefits the farmer (they get a node) while extending your coverage into underserved rural areas. Frame it as mutual benefit.

Local businesses on tall buildings

Rooftop access to commercial buildings dramatically improves urban coverage. Property managers are more receptive if the installation is visually minimal (a small white antenna on an existing mast) and the equipment is professionally installed. Before any commercial-rooftop install, confirm

who actually controls the roof (owner vs. property manager vs. tenant) - a property manager rarely owns the building and is bound by the owner's lease and insurance requirements. Expect to provide a certificate of commercial liability insurance naming the owner as additional insured, sign a roof-access/structural-penetration waiver, and obtain landlord and any HOA/condo-board approval. Antenna or structural changes may also require a local permit.

Fire stations and public works facilities

Many local government facilities are interested in off-grid communication resilience. Fire stations in particular often have tall buildings, 24/7 power, and emergency-preparedness motivation.

Making the ask

The pitch that works best:

1. Explain what mesh radio is in one sentence: "It's like a community text messaging network that works without cell towers or internet."
2. Show them the current coverage map and where their location fits in
3. Offer to handle the installation completely - they don't have to do anything
4. Describe the equipment: a small weatherproof box, one antenna, and very low power draw (a typical node averages well under 5 watts; continuous transmit is higher but the low duty cycle keeps the average small)
5. Where budget allows, offering the host their own device can sweeten the ask so they can actually use the network - treat this as a planned, recurring cost (roughly \$30+ per device), not a default promise you make to every host

Host agreement basics

Keep it simple but clear. A simple one-page document covering:

- What equipment is being installed and who owns it
- Who is responsible for maintenance and removal
- Power consumption (a solar node draws no grid power at all; a mains-powered node at roughly 1-5 W continuous costs on the order of a few dollars per year in electricity)
- How to contact you if there's a problem
- That you'll remove it on reasonable notice if they ask

Don't over-engineer this for private or residential hosts - most will never look at the agreement again, but having it shows professionalism and prevents misunderstandings years later when personnel change. However, commercial, government, and utility hosts (fire stations, public works, businesses) typically require a formal license or lease plus proof of commercial general liability

insurance naming them as additional insured - an informal one-pager will not be enough for those sites.

Revision #3

Created 2026-05-03 03:44:41 UTC by Mesh America Admin

Updated 2026-06-10 04:19:35 UTC by Mesh America Admin