

**“Outing the Corporations” Investigative Reporting Proposal**

**Application Deadline: July 1**

**Return to: erin@themediaconsortium.com**

**Project Description:**

The continuing economic devastation wreaked by the Great Recession, profitable American corporations legally dodging income taxes during a fiscal crisis, and the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United v. FEC* decision that overturned decades of precedent to allow direct, unlimited and often secret corporate spending during elections, all have struck chords of deep popular disgust among millions of Americans.

The “We the People Project” is working with progressive media, labor, policy groups, business, netroots and grassroots organizations, cultural figures, and elected officials to coordinate an autumn 2011 campaign that will dramatically raise awareness of how corporate power lies at the root of so much of current policy.

**We the People is partnering with The Media Consortium to support special investigative coverage that tracks corporate influence on American politics.** Reporting will be produced between September 19 and November 2, at the one-year mark ahead of the 2012 election. Throughout the development and production process, We The People will work with TMC members and allies to create a “media crescendo” moment—a moment when the stories produced by TMC members and the issue of corporate influence itself become a hot topic across all media—that can be used by advocacy groups and the netroots to create social action. In addition, We The People will feature TMC members’ stories as part of the high-profile live event it is planning for late fall.

**Logistical Details and Program Requirements**

Project Manager: Tracy Van Slyke

TMC Applicants will be chosen by TMC staff

Logistical Details

* Project Duration: 4 months
* Internal Launch: July 1
* Public Launch: September 19
* End: Nov. 2
* Disbursement amount: $2,500-$7,500 per accepted applicant
* Number of groups: Between 5-10 media organizations, to be determined based on applications.
	+ Proposals for collaborations among two or more media organizations are welcome and accepted. Jointly fill out the application and note the roles and budget of each organization. Larger funding allocations will be more likely awarded to collaborations among media organizations.

Requirements: In order to participate in and be compensated for this project, your organization must fulfill the following requirements.

Editorial:

* Publish 1-2 **investigative pieces** during the September 19-November 2 window under the broad topic of corporate influence and politics. Organizations participating in this program should begin editorial planning as soon as they are accepted into the project. We are not looking for columns or opinion pieces. We want investigative reports that are going to break and drive news. Examples include:
	+ Tracking corporate money on national/state elections or legislation
	+ Tracking corporate money/interference on key political issues such as the environment, immigration, banking/economy
	+ Who are the next or similar Koch brothers?
	+ How is Wall Street gearing up for 2012 election?
	+ Ongoing impact of Citizens United
	+ And more…
* Pair a few investigative piece(s) with at least one additional “story telling” device. i.e. video, data visualization, podcast, graphics/charts.
* Integrate community and creative engagement tactics for developing, producing, promoting, sharing AND/OR discussing your investigative reports to help with broader discussion, and overarching impact.

Promotional:

* Promote all reporting from your organization on your social networks (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). You will also send out press releases, e-newsletters and participate in any other promotional efforts as needed.
* Work with We The People in advance of publication to support story promotion and booking of your reporter(s) on other media. This includes sharing story planning/development on a regular basis with key We The People and Media Consortium representatives.

Other Requirements:

* Credit The Media Consortium and We The People for supporting the reporting. Exact language TBD.
* Allow We The People to post, link and/or reprint produced pieces for online and/or print toolkits.



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*Application Length Limit: 4 pages*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Will you be responsible for overseeing the program at your organization?

If no, please enter name and title here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you have read and agree to the requirements to the program, please mark X here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Why is your organization interested in reporting on the topic of corporate influence on our democracy?
*350 words or less*

2. Has your organization reported on this topic in the past?
Yes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If so, please share headlines and links to past reporting over past year

3. Please provide a brief outline of a) the likely topic(s) that your media organization(s) would focus on and why. Let us know what scoop you hope to uncover, scandal you hope to lay bare, or top-secret information you want to blow up.

4. Please provide a sketch of how your organization(s) would produce the investigative piece(s), including

a) primary and secondary platform(s) (text/web)

b) Production element(s) video/audio/visual/text (or combo)

c) Community Engagement tactics

d) Other

5. Please provide a simple budget breakdown in a separate document clarifying what resources you will invest on reporting, production and impact. It’s OK to produce a 2-scenario budget (low-end and high-end). You may use the accompanying form or provide one of your own.

6. Please provide a quick snapshot of your audience:

Size: (i.e. print, online, viewers, listeners e-list, twitter followers, Facebook fans, etc…)

Geographic Distribution:

Demographics:

What kinds of influentials in your audience would be receptive to this topic? (i.e. activists, policy makers, high number of retweeters, press contacts)

7. Please provide a brief overview of your Public Relations capabilities, including social networking strategies/opportunities, press and ally relationships/contacts and what you could do to promote your reporting.

8. Do you have a reporter already on staff or a freelancer identified that covers this beat?

If so, please note their name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
**Sample Budget Document**

Please fill in this worksheet as a part of your application.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **REVENUE** |  | **NOTES** |  |  |
| Requested amount (between $2500-$7500) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Other funding |  | Other dedicated funding your organization can apply to this project |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| In-kind\* |  | How much in your own resources you will put towards this project |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL REVENUE:** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **How many pieces will you produce?** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **EXPENSES** |  | **NOTES** |  |  |
|  |  | Please detail expenses out for the work you will produce. Feel free to add/subtract line items. |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Content Creation |  | Detail out costs for content creator(s) |
| Reporter | $ |  |  |  |
| Graphic Journo | $ |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Production |  | Please account for all production costs |
| Camera/Tech | $ |  |  |  |
| Editing | S |  |  |  |
| Web Designer | $ | e.g. create "popup" graphic for website |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Promotion |  |  |  |  |
| Social Media Promotions | $ | Allocate % time for social media staff |
| Additional Materials | $ | e.g. if you create extra content for promo (such as video, audio, etc.) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Other Expenses (please detail out) | S |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTAL | $ |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| \* We know your total costs will be more than are covered by the grant. Getting a snapshot of full costs will help us fundraise in the future--TMC |