

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

**Application Deadline: July 1**

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

*Application Length Limit: 4 pages*

Name: \_\_\_\_Matthew Rothschild\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_Editor and Publisher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_The Progressive\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Because the problem of corporate power over our democracy has been a crucial issue for *The Progressive* since we were founded back in 1909 by Fighting Bob La Follette. He said, in the very first issue, “The battle is just on. It is young yet. It will be the longest and hardest every fought for Democracy.” Our mission statement talks about “championing democracy” and opposing the “the concentration of power in corporate hands.” We understand that this problem is only getting worse, especially after the *Citizens United* decision, which we denounced. (And we called for a constitutional amendment as a remedy.) We’ve seen the pernicious influence here in Wisconsin over the last 8 months, and we want to do all we can to raise awareness of this problem.

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

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

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

“The Wisconsin Model,” by John Nichols, July 2011, <http://www.progressive.org/nichols0711.html>

“The Waiting Game,” by Jim Hightower, May 2011

“Tea Party Trojan Horse,” by Jim Hightower, March 2011

“The Rule of the Rich,” by Bill Moyers, February 2011

http://www.progressive.org/moyers0211.html

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.

Story #1: The role of the Republican State Leadership Committee

This little-known group, founded in 2002, has been pouring money into contested state races. Acting as a shadow RNC, it has played a decisive role in Wisconsin and in many other states. Able to raise unlimited funds and mask them, it represents a huge menace to our democracy and a stalking horse for corporate America.

Reporter: Elizabeth DiNovella, culture editor of *The Progressive*

Story #2: Inside ALEC, and the Wisconsin Connection

The American Legislative Exchange Council, underwritten by huge corporations, has an enormous hidden influence at the state level. But it’s role in Wisconsin, during the tumultuous and unprecedented assault on labor, has gone underreported. Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald has long been an ALEC member and has been serving as the state chair of ALEC. He has boasted about taking ALEC “boilerplate bills” and pushing them through.

Reporter: State Assemblyman Mark Pocan, progressive Democrat, who will be going to the ALEC meeting this summer.

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

a) The first platform will be in *The Progressive* magazine itself. Then the stories will appear on our website at progressive.org. The reporters will also summarize their pieces in two-minute videos on the website.

b) The videos would be done in-house by *The Progressive*.

c) We will share our stories nationally and especially with groups in Wisconsin, such as the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and FightingBob.com and Workers Independent News and the Center on Media and Democracy, that are working on the problem of money in politics.

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…)  
*The Progressive* magazine: 42,000 paid subscribers.

*The Progressive* e-list: 16,000.

Twitter followers: 10,000.

Facebook friends: 2,000.

Radio listeners to *Progressive Radio* and Matt Rothschild’s commentaries: on about 20 stations.

Geographic Distribution: national

Demographics: All ages. The magazine tends to have an older audience than our other platforms. Highly educated. Politically active.

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

Liberal political figures such as Tammy Baldwin, Keith Ellison, Russ Feingold, and Dennis Kucinich read us and would be receptive.

Progressive press, such as Thom Hartmann and Amy Goodman and CommonDreams, also receptive.

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.

Beyond issuing press releases, we will feed these stories to our contacts in the progressive press and to our allied groups in the anti-corporate, pro-democracy network.

We will seek statewide attention for these stories via Wisconsin Public Radio, where we have excellent contacts.

And we will seek national attention by sending out op-ed commentaries on the stories via the Progressive Media Project, which distributes through the McClatchy News Service.

We will also air an interview on *Progressive Radio* with the authors.

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

If so, please note their name \_\_Jim Hightower writes a lot for us on this subject in his monthly column.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
**Sample Budget Document**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **REVENUE** |  | **NOTES** |  |  |
| Requested amount (between $2500-$7500) | $2,700 |  | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Other funding |  | Other dedicated funding your organization can apply to this project | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| In-kind\* | $2,700 | How much in your own resources you will put towards this project | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL REVENUE:** | $5,400 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **How many pieces will you produce?** | two |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **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 | $2,000 | To fly Pocan to ALEC meeting;  Reporting time for DiNovella |  |  |
| Graphic Journo | $1,000 | For illustrations |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Production |  | Please account for all production costs | | |
| Camera/Tech | $200 | For web video |  |  |
| Editing | S1,000 | For all editing and proofing |  |  |
| Web Designer | $200 | For posting and displaying | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Promotion |  |  |  |  |
| Social Media Promotions | $1,000 | 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 | $5,400 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| \* 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 | | | | |