

INNOVATION FUND APPLICATION ROUND 2

Submission Date	2014-09-02 20:27:17
Organization Name	100Reporters
Tax-exempt status	501(c)(3) organization
EIN of organization (or of fiscal sponsor's organization)	
Website address	http://100R.org
Phone Number	
Applicant's name	Diana Jean Schemo
Title:	Executive Editor
Contact email	
Proposed Start Date	10-01-2014
Proposed End Date	10-30-2015
Total estimated budget for the proposed project	\$35,000
What is the total annual budget for your organization or, if you are a project of another organization, the total annual budget for your overall project.	\$475,000
Request amount:	\$35,000
In two or three sentences, describe your organization's purpose and audience.	100Reporters' mission is "to inform and promote the public's right to know through investigative journalism, adapting traditional tools and standards of ethics and excellence to the new media landscape, and working with whistleblowers and citizen watchdogs to expose corruption and heighten public accountability." Working with indigenous reporters as well as accomplished investigative journalists at home and abroad, 100Reporters exposes wrongdoing at its source – inside the communities where government and corporate offenders live and work -- for the benefit of everyone who must bear the financial and social impact of their wrongdoing. Resulting stories receive maximum exposure, appearing on both the 100Reporters' website and in partner news outlets that have recently included The New York Times, Washington Post, NBC News, CNN Money and PRI's The World.
Describe in detail the project for which you are requesting funds. How does it fit with your sustainability plans? Explain the	100Reporters is proposing to launch a 2-3 day Investigative Film Festival (IFF) that would further integrate us within our hometown of Washington, D.C., while earning revenue through a series of film screenings and related events

need for this project, and how you expect it to increase revenue and/or audience engagement.

intended to be replicable in subsequent years. The goals of this series would be fourfold, as elementary as ABCD:

- Annual fundraiser – through establishment of a prototype to pave the way for future Investigative Film Festivals. This project would initiate a structure for a sustainable, annual model for subsequent IFFs, intended to be an independent stream of unrestricted revenue that 100Reporters can grow over time;
- Branding – to present and/or solidify 100Reporters' mission and services for accountability journalism, and its image among the D.C. hometown audience;
- Community – Build awareness and support of 100Reporters (including among collaborating marketing and media partners), and engage an audience on the home front;
- Drive awareness - and remind policymakers and the public of the importance of independent investigative reporting for government and corporate accountability.

The festival would showcase new releases of documentaries and feature films inspired by investigative journalism or about investigative journalists. This broad foundation includes not just documentaries and feature films, but cable series, television shows and other popular entertainment. Program selection criteria would include timely, newsworthy, and riveting topics, sound production values and appeal to D.C.'s sophisticated audience.

The festival would bring together new films and talent from New York and Hollywood, which we would reach via our extensive network of contacts. Hollywood (and the international film community) have repeatedly demonstrated that they will lend resources and star power to Washington D.C. when these opportunities provide access to influential members of the press and political class. And, as the White House Correspondent's Dinner demonstrates each year, Washington will turn out for Hollywood.

The Investigative Film Festival will consist of a weekend of screenings and talks/presentations to occur during late afternoon/evening hours. We plan at least one VIP reception. Two prototype plans (Plan A and Plan B) are in the drafting stage. Plan A is based on a budget of \$35,000, the amount requested here, and assumes an art house or nonprofit venue (such as the West End Cinema or The Institute of Peace). These theaters accommodate audiences of 75 to 150 people. They would carry a less aggressive expense model, but would also derive less revenue from sponsorships. Plan B supposes a marquee venue (such as the Newseum), with a screening capacity of 400 seats, a mandatory catering component and other big ticket expense items, 65% of which would be underwritten through sponsorship sales. 100Reporters will test the appetite for a large-scale event, but is fully prepared to stage this inaugural festival for the amount requested.

This festival will earn revenue in a variety of ways:
1. Sponsorships – a carefully valuated sponsorship package will enable business entities to support the IFF based upon levels of value at different price points. The frequency, numbers and type of audience accessed will set the value for sponsorships, as well as the commonality of the sponsor's goals with that of the festival audience, a

specific screening and/or topic. Sponsorship is viewed as key to festival profitability; careful scrutiny will be paid to measure the validity of this assertion in its aftermath.

2. Program advertising – as an incremental means for raising funds through local businesses.
3. In-kind support – will be sought, tracked and evaluated for both the absolute value of in-kind support, (e.g., silent auction items donated by local businesses), as well as for the in-kind value of goods and services to underwrite expenses otherwise borne by the IFF project budget (e.g., venue, food, printing, labor).
4. Ticket sales – 100Reporters will sell tickets for single screenings/events as well as “packages,” such as a “complete series.” In addition, we will sell tickets for remote access via computer and mobile devices. We regard revenue earned through ticket sales to be an incremental bonus, added to the three other methods, which should be key to covering costs.

Partners, partnerships and collaborations will play a major part in the design of the IFF.

- Affinity organizations (e.g., GAP, ACLU, Human Rights Watch, First Amendment Center, NRDF, West End Cinema, others) will assist in marketing.
- Transparency International and other watchdog partners will assist in reaching remote participants worldwide; a remote domestic and international audience will also engage in blogging and interactive discussion, and could potentially lead to a content off-shoot.
- Capitol Hill may also provide co-timed programming of interest to journalists and engaged citizens. Examples might include themed round-table discussion or brown bag lunch on the role of journalism and/or investigative reporting.

This proposal springs from 100Reporters’ Strategic Plan for 2015-2017, which spans identifies sustainability goals, each of which a driving role in the organization’s operations:

- a) Develop independent sources of revenue – for greater financial leverage. Since 100Reporters launched a “mini-series” of two screenings with panel discussions (Fall 2012), the board has expressed interest in following up with a full-blown Investigative Film Festival as an annual anchor event, and potential means toward financial independence and agency sustainability.
- b) Build audience and collaborative partnerships – including greater involvement with the community in our home city of Washington, DC. Aligning with this goal is 100Reporters’ 2014-15 objective of hiring an Audience Development Director; for certain deliverables, this position would coordinate activities alongside the IFF Project Manager.
- c) Collaborating with other journalism and community-based organizations – to grow audience and reach through co-marketing. In addition, the executive editor is focused on expanding collaborations with identified media outlets.

Is this a new project?

New project. We have not done this before.

Who will help carry out the project? Describe the key staff and capabilities. If you plan to use outside partners, consultants, or vendors, tell us

Diana Jean Schemo, co-founding executive editor of 100Reporters:
30 years in journalism with The New York Times and The Baltimore Sun, reporting as foreign bureau chief from 30

why you chose them (or how you will select them). Will you need to hire additional fulltime or part-time help to complete your proposed project?

countries, national education reporter. Built prize winning investigative news site that has gained in scope, coverage, funding, recognition, page hits, collaborating partners and more since its founding three years ago. Schemo would provide project and operational oversight to IFF.

Lori E. Gold, board member and professional fundraiser (volunteer)

30 years consulting to businesses of all sizes, and with specialty in not-for-profits, brings skill in events, fundraising, sponsor relations, project management and marketing. Gold will work with Project Manager in cultivating sponsorships, building partnerships with community-based organizations and other facets of event operations.

Festival Project Manager (TBD)

A dedicated, experienced event manager will be hired to insure successful execution of this project. The job description calls for experience in convening and staging film festivals. The IFF Project Manager will be responsible for creating a roadmap, timeline and project plan for managing the IFF from beginning to end. The steps necessary to execute the festival, progress vs. dates, expenses, unforeseen opportunities, interdependencies and emerging roadblocks will be evaluated bi-weekly; the executive editor will oversee the project.

As of proposal writing, 100Reporters is requesting recommendations and references from contacts at production houses, theaters, film festival organizers (e.g., Toronto Film Festival, Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, newer festivals of smaller size). Consideration is being given to an event manager with national sponsorship contacts and excellent, proven event management skills. This Past events, for example, have brought an average of \$250K in net revenue (though results were built over period of 8 years for an entity known in its community).

Volunteers

To help pair volunteers with positions, 100Reporters will compile a list of needed, available volunteer positions and job descriptions, to be further modified by the IFF Project Director. 100Reporters currently runs on volunteer power; we work with 5 volunteers who average 48 hours per month. The IFF volunteer outreach plan will entail communication with volunteer-matching organizations (e.g., VolunteerMatch, Volunteer Spot), colleges (American University, GWU, Howard), SCORE, and through friends, colleagues and partners. Each volunteer, whether existing or new, will be vetted, mutually matched to a suitable assignment (for long-term duration, day of event, or some combination), asked to commit for the duration of the project, and receive training about the event and their assignment. Current projections are for 25 volunteers needed for the IFF. Volunteer management will fall under the direct supervision of the IFF Project Manager.

How will you measure progress? Please be specific and concrete about the metrics you will use?

Progress will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative metrics will use progress outcomes compared against current statistics, if available, or will otherwise have baselines established. Qualitative feedback will be collected to document valuable feedback and attendee and partner ideas. In addition to determining short-term performance

outcomes upon IFF conclusion, 100Reporters intends to take an additional pulse 6 months out, to assess longer-term progress.

Metrics will include:

- Attendance at each performance
- Revenue by category
- Marketing collaborators
- Number of media Partners
- Social media growth
- Audience satisfaction survey

Using those metrics, what is the threshold of success for this project?

As an inaugural event, 100Reporters is keeping expectations modest in year one. Success will be defined through:

- Attendance – At least 75 percent of seats will be filled for each 4 performances; a minimum of 100 people will log in to participate remotely;
- Revenue by category – 75% of sponsor targets will be reached within two weeks of screening;
- Marketing collaborators – 3-5 new relationships will be made with civic organizations and 80% will market the IFF to their email and social media members.
- Media partners – 3-5 new media partners will participate in some manner (attendance, request / follow up on information, sit on a panel).
- On-line numbers growth for 100Reporters: Facebook, Twitter – Using current subscribers as baseline, new subscribers will increase by 10% within four weeks of festival, and by 20% six months after festival.
- Audience satisfaction survey – 75% of attendees responding to the survey will rate the festival “good” or better.

100Reporters will deem the IFF a success in its inaugural year if the above metrics are reached, to enable validation of a model which will generate interest, relationships, attendance and profitability in years two and three.

How will INN be able to validate the metrics and how the project did using those metrics?

Each objective and its means for measurement will be shared with INN. 100Reporters will provide a report to INN that indicates for each line item, the beginning date and baseline followed by the closing date and level achieved. Individual tools such as customer satisfaction surveys will provide additional independent validation. Financial benchmarks will be certified by a third party, such as by a separate IFF bank account. EventBrite (or another service), Google and other third party mechanisms will validate statistics as well.

What do you hope to learn from this project, and how do you hope to apply what you've learned over the long term?

The requested grant will give 100Reporters the financial scaffolding for a multi-day event, allowing it to focus on the logistics of staging, financing, marketing and executing live community events. The IFF project will allow 100Reporters to “test” local venues and establish relationships within them and the film industry, to lay groundwork and future growth of subsequent Investigative Film Festivals.

One important area we expect to gain expertise is in timing

necessary to synchronize all of the moving parts of a large event. The elements of a successful film festival—with its related discussions, meals, social events and operations—can be cumbersome alone individually. When combined, and further adding sponsorships, underwriting cultivation and sales on top, timing can be a critical element that can make or break an event's viability.

100Reporters expects to learn about finding, selecting and working with volunteers on a larger scale than we have experienced before. Collaboration with other organizations on various aspects of the Festival, such as marketing or convening panel discussions, will enable 100Reporters to stretch its legs within the community, and build mutual audiences.

With a goal of the IFF to provide an additional and independent revenue stream, 100Reporters hopes to gain expertise on how to “commoditize” its production, in order to minimize its demands on our news business – the major focus of 100Reporters’ reason for being.

The hiring of a dedicated Project Manager and management of this position within the organization will be a challenge. The 100Reporters’ Executive Editor and board will be involved in oversight and steering, respectively. Given the scale of the IFF event compared to anything previously launched by 100Reporters, teamwork on a project of this magnitude will be a learning experience in managing, monitoring and executing.

Practices identified and documented in the design and creation of the IFF will be compiled into a template for other INN members’ use and adaptation, per their own market needs, demographics, cultural competencies and specialized topics. 100Reporters hope to realize goals of audience development and revenue growth, and be able to share lessons learned.

Why are you the right organization and team to do this project?

100Reporters is based in Washington, DC, a city with a high level of interest in stories about politics, power and secrets. The 100Reporters board and staff counts strong contacts in the press, legal and policymaking circles – and a networking prowess that has brought these connections together for business, entertainment and other purposes.

As part of a series called Something to Talk About, 100Reporters organized and hosted panel discussions for several documentary film screenings beginning November 2012. Partners included Washington, DC’s West End Cinema, Brainstorm Media and DirecTV. Program panels featured investigative journalists, attorneys and personalities involved in the issues under discussion. 100Reporters did extensive outreach and marketing and all partners participated in marketing within the community. As a consequence, seats at every screening were filled to capacity.

Further, the success of the 2012 events solidified important relationships: 100Reporters introduced Brainstorm Media to the Investigative News Network, which has been working with INN members on turning stories into documentary films. West End Cinema management has been expressing

eagerness in partnering with 100Reporters again, and in staging the IFF (including theater occupancy at minimal cost).

These experiences demonstrate that 100Reporters can engage audiences passionate about corporate and government accountability, if we have the bandwidth to do so on a consistent basis. We also count on a large team of dedicated volunteers with a wide variety of strengths, who are ready to assist with marketing, legal counsel, administration and other needs. 100Reporters wishes to put our assets to work for the long-term sustainability of our organization, and for the benefit of the INN network.

Why is this project timely? Why is now a good time to undertake this project?

At a time independent reporting and the rights of reporters are under fire, this Investigative Film Festival would raise awareness of the role of investigative and cutting-edge journalism in holding power accountable. As you read this, The New York Times' national security correspondent, James Risen, has been under threat of imprisonment despite the US Attorney General's claims to the contrary. The U.K. government has forced the Guardian newspaper to physically destroy computers in a futile bid to prevent coverage of the Edward Snowden NSA leaks. The South African government is seeking to restrict access to information. Front and center, explicitly or lurking in the background, the role of the press and rights of reporters are being challenged. One casualty is the public's right to know, and ability to hold government and private powerbrokers accountable for their actions.

This is not only the right time for an Investigative Film Festival, but the right place. Washington D.C.'s population is politically astute, affluent and highly educated. (In fact, the D.C. metropolitan area has ranked first in education of the nation's metropolitan areas for four decades running, and its median household income of \$88,223 is the highest of the nation's 25 biggest metropolitan areas, according to Census Bureau figures.)

Current events have proven to be compelling topics for documentary and feature films, as evidenced by their explosion (Economist 8/27/2013; Harmony Institute, June 2012). Topic-driven film festivals and their allure are growing, too, and have been drawing sellout crowds.

The growing potential of events as a source of revenue for news organizations, commercial and nonprofit, has by now been documented by a number of foundations and research organizations (e.g., the Neiman Foundation). The experiences of The Atlantic magazine, The New Yorker, The New York Times, the nonprofit Texas Tribune and other media show that successful events do more than produce revenue: they advance an organization's mission, build its reputation and grow community support.

Upload your project budget

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