# INNovation Fund Application

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<th><strong>Submission Date</strong></th>
<th>2014-03-03 22:27:39</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Name</strong></td>
<td>Public Herald</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tax-exempt status</strong></td>
<td>Fiscally-sponsored project of 501(c)(3) organization</td>
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<td><strong>EIN of organization (or of fiscal sponsor's organization)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Website address</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://publicherald.org">http://publicherald.org</a></td>
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<td><strong>Phone Number</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Applicant's name</strong></td>
<td>Melissa Troutman</td>
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<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>Managing Editor</td>
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<td><strong>Contact email</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed Start Date</strong></td>
<td>06-03-2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed End Date</strong></td>
<td>12-03-2014</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total estimated project budget</strong></td>
<td>$53,000</td>
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<td><strong>Request amount:</strong></td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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In two or three sentences, describe your organization's purpose and audience.

Public Herald is a nonprofit organization dedicated to investigative journalism in the public interest. Our independent group of journalists and artists work with communities who face challenging conditions to tell their stories through engaging online journalism and multimedia projects. We are focused on accountability where people are silenced by abuse of power from government, industry, social or environmental circumstances.

Describe in detail the project for which you are requesting funds. How does it fit with your sustainability plans? Explain the need for this project, and how you expect it to increase revenue and/or audience engagement.

Public Herald proposes a screening and discussion tour of its investigative documentary 'Triple Divide' through several key areas where hydrofracking is proposed across the U.S to 1) educate the public about our investigations of unconventional oil and gas development in one of the largest shale fields in the world, 2) build PH's membership and readership base, 3) increase network partnerships, 4) increase public knowledge and engagement with PH's new Fileroom project, and 5) test drive and review a zero-emission vehicle's feasibility for long-distance travel.

Public Herald proposes to engage new audiences and increase sustainability by hosting events in Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, New Mexico, California, Michigan and key areas in between where onshore unconventional oil and gas development via fracking is being planned or in the initial stages of development. Each event will consist of a screening of 'Triple Divide' and discussion with local groups, elected officials, media and the public about the issues presented. Each community will be introduced to PH's new
open source #Fleroom project, which makes otherwise 'invisible' data about citizen reports of fracking impacts available to the public as digital files organized by state, county, and township. Updates about the tour will also be published weekly via online platforms.

'Triple Divide' is the powerful, acclaimed product of an 18-month investigation by Public Herald into the negative impacts from fracking in Pennsylvania since 2008 and how those impacts are handled by regulators and industry. Public Herald's findings have already informed the debate around public and environmental health, transparency, and accountability issues surrounding oil and gas development throughout four screening tours in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and New York.

Astonishingly, these tours have increased Public Herald's member-base by over 220% in just 11 months, and we hope to continue this trend nationally.

'Triple Divide' reveals new aspects of fracking not covered anywhere else, such as the predrill water testing scandal and "pressure bulb" effect from fracking, both of which have grave consequences yet little to no state and federal oversight or public awareness. Though Public Herald's investigation covers cradle-to-grave impacts, particular attention is paid to water contamination and the methods by which industry avoids accountability. These investigations are immensely valuable to communities we propose to visit.

Public Herald will continue to engage new members and audiences well after the proposed project would be complete. Members receive rewards, incentives to share, and are invited to becoming Sustaining Members. Members also gain access to advisors and experts with whom we work, i.e. attorneys, hydrogeologists, editors, consultants.

Public Herald also sends members periodic exclusive updates, which will become monthly updates beginning May 2014.

**Touring requires fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, both of which Public Herald strives to decrease as part of its sustainability plan. (We take our consumption seriously.) Therefore, we aim to cross the nation in a zero emissions vehicle such as Tesla's Model S, and share the experience as a test drive and rolling review on PublicHerald.org. Electric vehicles can be charged at campgrounds and RV parks across the country, many of which have cabins for cheaper rates than most hotels. This part of the proposal is contingent upon partnership with an EV manufacturer.

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**Is this a new project?**

**Extension of an existing project. We are doing this now or have done it in the past year.**

**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**

'Triple Divide' creators and Public Herald co-founders Melissa Troutman and Joshua Pribanic will carry out this project. Troutman serves as Program Director and Managing Editor of Public Herald. Pribanic serves as Editor-in-chief and CEO.
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?

As the sole staff behind ‘Triple Divide’ and Public Herald, Troutman and Pribanic alone have handled all administrative, operational, and membership development, created all online platforms, web design and marketing (including three websites and successful crowd-sourcing campaigns), written/produced/directed/edited a feature length documentary, and published more than 20 reports since their founding of Public Herald in 2011.

It is highly likely that one to two interns will be acquired through an established partnership with Edinboro University to help with tour marketing, promotions and publishing.

Additional partners include FracTracker Alliance for data and watershed mapping and Mountain Watershed Association for educational materials and fiscal sponsorship.

**Partnership with an EV manufacturer is necessary to complete the project using a zero-emissions vehicle for tour transport.

Progress will be measured by 1) the number of participants at each screening event, 2) number of new memberships garnered at each, 3) number of new subscribers to Public Herald, 4) amount of revenue generated by each event, and 5) online engagement at PublicHerald.org, TripleDivideFilm.org and the #fileroom project at PublicFiles.org (demonstrated by unique page views per week/month). These metrics will be calculated after each event and recorded in a Google Spreadsheet shared with funders who’ll be able to check progress at any time.

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

Even though our reporting since 2011 has been focused in Pennsylvania, the issues presented (fracking, accessibility to fresh water, human rights, environmental planning, accountability) are globally relevant, demonstrated by the fact that ‘Triple Divide’ has already been viewed in 23 countries despite our spending zero time on overseas promotions.

Therefore, we hypothesize that the successes we’ve had in expanding and engaging audiences through screening and discussion events in Marcellus and Utica Shale states can be reproduced in key states where fracking development is in its early stages. In fact, our research may prove much more valuable in the states we are proposing to tour, should we be awarded funding.

If we are indeed able to replicate our success with tours so far, the members and audience gained will be incorporated into ongoing membership engagement through monthly updates and exclusive member benefits. The increase in membership will also be used to demonstrate Public Herald’s long-term viability to foundations and major donors we solicit for long-term funding diversification.

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

Public Herald is unique in its focus on +Truth and +Creativity to report on issues of public interest and nurture solutions to those issues through community and artist engagement. The diverse talents, dedication and flexibility of founders Joshua Pribanic and Melissa Troutman lend adaptability and resilience to the overall success of both the
proposed project and Public Herald as a whole.

'Triple Divide' is co-narrated by actor Mark Ruffalo and has been declared "a bombshell that could reverberate across the state." Every audience that has viewed the documentary has expressed sincere astonishment at artistic quality and journalistic integrity of the work. Reviews and testimonies are available online and by request.

Please email Melissa@publicherald.org for a link and password to view the Triple Divide online screener.

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

After repeated screening successes, Public Herald has come to realize the sustaining power of these events to both inform and engage audiences about a timely subject that is simultaneously hyper-local and global. By reveal injustices and the loopholes through which they occur, 'Triple Divide' has helped citizen, business and other stakeholders find common ground to speak about this controversial issue in a way that gets to the bottom of what impacts are occurring and what can be done about them. This has proven an invaluable resource for communities faces with new fracking development proposed for their regions.

**Conducting a tour using a zero-emission electric vehicle will also launch Public Herald into a trending debate about the viability and practicality of the latest, greatest automobile technology.

Upload your project budget

INNovation-Fund-Project-Budget-PUBLIC-HERALD.xlsx