

Investigative Reporter Job Description

Example 1

News Organization is looking for an investigative reporter who lives to expose wrongdoing, corruption, exploitation, the holes in society's safety nets and the powerful people responsible for fixing them. Founded in 2009 as a nonprofit, *News Organization* measures success a little differently; we pursue in-depth reporting on critical issues in hopes of producing real-life change and, bit by bit, making the world a better place.

This job is full-time and includes benefits. While *News Organization* is headquartered in Seattle, we are open to reporters working remotely anywhere in the state of Washington, Oregon or Idaho.

We're looking for someone who:

- Has a track record of producing impactful in-depth or investigative stories.
- Aspires to great storytelling and studies the giants of the craft.
- Gets reluctant sources to talk candidly and has a deft touch with people who have experienced trauma.
- Hungrily pursues the truth, digging through records, databases and people's differing accounts.
- Can work both independently and collaboratively.
- Brings a little extra to the table (like data analysis, photography, video, crowdsourced reporting or community engagement skills).
- Has a long list of project ideas and can juggle quick, mid-range and long-term investigations.

We are dedicated to making our organization better reflect the region we cover and are committed to fostering an inclusive environment for people of different ages and backgrounds. We encourage members of historically underrepresented communities to apply, including women, people of color, LGBTQ people and people with disabilities.

Compensation: The salary range is \$40,000-\$65,000, depending on experience. Also, a monthly work-from-home stipend of \$100, and 100% coverage of health insurance.

Start date: June 2022.



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Send us a cover letter, resume and five work samples **using this form; Deadline:** May 6. Email questions to hireing@email.org. No phone calls, please.

Example 2

The *News Organization* team is excited to meet our first full-time investigative reporter—who will help lead our nonprofit newsroom and develop unique, hard-hitting investigations on some of the biggest issues the military and veteran communities face today. You'll hold powerful people and institutions accountable, and produce stories with lasting impact. You'll be a leader at a nonprofit newsroom that produces award-winning projects, and you should be prepared to grow alongside a world-class team of reporters and editors. Simply put, your mission will be to develop world-changing reporting projects.

At the *News Organization*, we don't just accept difference—we support and celebrate it. Our newsroom and our community thrive on it. We want, in turn, to ensure that a wide variety of voices are present and represented in all that we do. We welcome all applicants regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, citizenship, marital status, income level, disability, gender identity, veteran status, or other personal characteristic.

Our Programs

Newsroom: Our investigative and multimedia reporting has been recognized with prestigious journalism awards and has led to changes in military and federal law. The ideal candidate will be deeply committed to building a sustainable nonprofit newsroom that shines a light on abuses of power and betrayals of public trust—and sticks with those issues for as long as it takes to hold power to account.

Writers Program: Since 2016, *News Organization* has published more than 250 reflections, which form the cornerstone of our writers program and provide vital context for our reporting. Many of these stories come directly from our writing seminars—all-expenses-paid workshops centered around community-building and training the next generation of war writers. Our writing seminars ensure those most affected by war have a prominent voice in the national conversation. The ideal candidate will embrace mentorship opportunities with *News Organization* Fellows to help nurture them as writers during and after attending the writing seminar.

Primary Responsibilities



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The investigative reporter will work alongside the managing editor to help set *News Organization's* editorial vision, inspire our growing newsroom team to do its best work, and expand the organization's reputation as one of the country's most credible nonprofit newsrooms. The investigative reporter will uphold the highest journalistic standards. The ideal candidate will grow alongside *The War Horse* and the position has the potential to become a role where the candidate manages reporters and other editorial staff. The reporter will report directly to the managing editor.

Our ideal candidate has a distinguished track record of conceiving and executing ambitious, high-impact projects. We're looking for well-honed instincts for assessing story leads and tips, and coaching journalists through dead ends and alleyways in the reporting process. The ideal candidate will be prepared to navigate the thorniest parts of difficult investigations, crafting FOIAs, developing sources to talk, navigating ethical issues, and preparing for security concerns.

The investigative reporter will have a strong personal editorial vision and an articulated process for developing, refining, and maximizing the ideas and ambitions of others. Key to this role is the ongoing process of building a culture of respect and teamwork within the organization. The person in this position will inspire others, serve as a mentor and coach, and continue to foster a high-performing, creative newsroom environment.

News Organization is committed to collaboration. An ideal candidate will execute partnerships to co-produce and distribute stories, participate in innovative public engagement events, design and facilitate local reporting initiatives, and more. The successful candidate will share our belief that a diverse newsroom results in better reporting and is critical to our long-term relevance, growth, sustainability, and success.

In addition to supporting engagement and newsroom operations, the investigative reporter will be responsible for:

- A minimum of 3-4 explainers monthly, roughly 1,500 words or less, that break down timely, newsworthy topics to bridge the military and civilian divide.
- A minimum of one monthly ambitious, solutions-driven investigation or data project focused on improving the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.
- A minimum of one quarterly enterprise package that explores complex experiences and issues impacting veterans and military families.

Qualifications



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This is an extraordinary opportunity for an individual with extensive reporting and editing experience to grow in an investigative reporting unit dedicated to shining a light on abuses of power and betrayals of public trust within the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. We seek someone who:

- Demonstrates commitment to dogged reporting; combs through documents and cultivates human sources to tell intriguing, high-impact investigative stories
- Views reporting as an opportunity to nurture your talents and be deeply invested in sharing them to benefit the professional growth of the members of *News Organization* team.
- Embraces creativity and experimentation, with a thoughtful approach to resource allocation that balances investment in new ideas and in our core work.
- Executes high-impact, high-stakes investigations. National and/or international experience is preferred.

Navigates the legal and security protections necessary to support and protect an investigative newsroom.

- Keeps lists of story ideas and potential projects and can't wait to report them.
- Loves a good team, the opportunity to mentor, and the possibility of continual brainstorming opportunities to prove good journalism matters.

Salary and Benefits

This is a full-time salaried position based remotely. Compensation is \$80,000/yr along with a growing benefits package including 401k with matching, healthcare stipend, digital privacy services, and more. To have a direct impact on the veterans and military families we serve, submit your cover letter, resume, and three clips demonstrating ambitious, impactful reporting to jobs@email.org. The deadline to apply is Friday, February 18, 2022.

Example 3

News Organization is seeking an investigative reporter to focus on the Wisconsin state Legislature, governor's office, state agencies and Supreme Court in a deeply polarized state where democracy itself is in peril.



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This position is ideal for a relentless reporter who knows how to navigate bureaucracies to uncover the effects of state legislation, policies and laws on the lives of people in Wisconsin. The coverage will amplify the voices of underserved residents and expose efforts to weaken democracy in the state through government secrecy, power grabs, disinformation and other strategies.

This reporter will launch *News Organization's* first-ever statehouse bureau. We plan to add at least one more reporter to the bureau in coming months if funding allows. Strategic partnerships with other Wisconsin news organizations, built upon more than a decade of collaboration, will provide the reporter with insights to inform and increase the impact of our journalism.

Start date for the position is negotiable, although we would love to have someone in place in January 2022. Salary is \$60,000 to \$70,000, commensurate with skills and experience.

News Organization is the news outlet of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism, a nonpartisan, independent nonprofit with offices at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication, roughly 1 mile from the state Capitol.

Our mission is “to increase the quality, quantity and understanding of investigative journalism to foster an informed citizenry and strengthen democracy.”

Our multimedia journalism digs into undercovered issues, documents broken and failing systems, puts findings into regional and national contexts and explores potential solutions. We aim to spark impact that improves people’s lives and holds power to account.

News Organization also trains current and future investigative journalists and entrepreneurs through workshops, internships and fellowships, mentoring and collaborations with journalism classes and news organizations. And we share information about journalistic practices, ethics and impact with the public.

Our guiding values: *Protect the vulnerable. Expose wrongdoing. Explore solutions.*

If you have just some of the skills listed below, or others we failed to list, please consider applying for this position, especially if you are a candidate whose experience includes working with diverse members of the public. We are a nimble organization that strives to make the best use of the skills of our staff, and is dedicated to developing them.



Responsibilities

The reporter will:

- Work with the managing editor, deputy managing editor and multimedia editor to strategize, frame, report and write news stories.
- Develop sources in state government and in diverse communities, including urban and rural, and engage members of the public in identifying breakdowns in systems, attempts to dissuade or mislead residents and explorations of potential solutions to problems.
- Cultivate collegial and productive relationships with other news organizations.
- Work with student-journalists, including in a classroom setting or online learning environment, and early-career journalists working as interns and fellows for Wisconsin Watch.
- Collaborate with journalists at for-profit and nonprofit news organizations in Wisconsin and across the nation.

Location: The reporter will be located in the state capital of Madison, with occasional travel throughout Wisconsin. Some evening and weekend work is necessary. Like many organizations, we're often working from home until COVID-19 conditions improve, and we take precautions when in-person reporting is necessary — such as at the Capitol. The vaccination rate on the UW-Madison campus is roughly 95%. Madison is routinely ranked among the top cities in the United States for liveability (although there's not a darn thing we can do about the winter weather)!

Qualifications: The ideal candidate will be able to report and complete complex stories and visualize related multimedia elements while meeting deadlines. The candidate also will be comfortable working with experienced as well as early-career journalists.

Bonus skills:

- Be able to analyze and visually present data.
- Familiarity with Wisconsin, its history and its politics.
- Multimedia skills including photography, audio, video and editing.
- Spanish-language proficiency.

Expected salary range: \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year, commensurate with skills and experience.



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Benefits: Generous paid vacation and holiday time, sick days, family and caregiver leave, subsidized medical and dental benefits, transportation benefits and self-funded 403(b) retirement plan.

Deadline: The initial application window will be open until December 31, 2021. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

To apply: Please fill out and submit this form. It will require you to upload a resume and provide links of up to 5 work samples plus a list of references with their contact information. If you'd like to chat about the job before applying, contact the Managing Editor at apply@email.org.

The *News Organization* embraces diversity and inclusiveness in our journalism, training activities, hiring practices and workplace operations. The complex issues we face as a society require respect for different viewpoints. Race, class, generation, sexual orientation, gender and geography all affect point of view. Reflecting these differences in our reporting leads to better, more-nuanced stories and a better-informed community.

We especially encourage members of traditionally underrepresented communities to apply, including people of color, LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities.

We look forward to hearing from you!