

# Progress Report

January 2011–June 2012

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**Three years ago, a small group of dedicated and experienced journalists gathered in Pocantico, New York to reassert the need to deliver investigative and public service journalism, and to create a consortium of nonprofit journalism centers named the Investigative News Network.**

Some of those present had been in the nonprofit sector for years; others were just starting out. But all of us envisioned a collaborative effort that would create cost savings, find new ways of distributing our work, and, most of all, support and ensure the production of high-quality journalism.

Over the following year we created a board, shared business tips, worked on stories together, and hired a first-rate digital publisher. Since then we have nearly tripled the number of our member organizations, continued to build our editorial collaborations, raised millions of dollars in support, and become increasingly savvy in our business practices.

We are still striving to find ways to sustain and expand the network, but this report shows the deep validity of our initial vision, and details the impressive accomplishments thus far. We hope it will serve as further inspiration and encouragement for both our members and supporters.

With Best Regards,

**Brant Houston**

Chair, Board of Directors, INN

**This July marked the end of my second year as the Investigative News Network's inaugural CEO and first employee.**

In our third year, I am happy to report that INN has doubled the size of its membership, successfully secured its own 501(c)(3) status, and is fully operational in each of the five key areas of support services: back-office, technology, sustainability, editorial, and social marketing.

We've staffed up to five full-time members of the INN team, and have expanded our board to nine members. The board includes representatives from member organizations of a range of size and models, and experienced executives and journalists as public members with significant business experience. Without the board's guidance and support, none of our achievements would have been possible, especially during my early months on the job.

INN also owes a debt of gratitude to the individuals and foundations that have invested in the network and continued to provide the support and flexibility we needed to establish a fully-functional operation.

Our growing community of 64 member organizations is undeniably vibrant. No two organizations have the same resources, funding, focus or business model, but we all have one thing in common: an unswerving devotion to producing high-quality, public-service and investigative journalism.

Our initial goals were to establish a working structure for the network and roll out programs in each of our key areas



of service. I am pleased to report we have met those goals. That said, I want to take this opportunity to share some of the achievements, challenges and lessons learned that are helping shape our future efforts.

In the following report, we highlight many of our success stories, including the production of multiple editorial collaborations among the membership and with outside partners, a media insurance program that has saved participating members tens of

thousands of dollars, and an ambitious training program in business skills for our members.

We also came up against persistent challenges that our member organizations face as they strive to establish sustainable institutions. These challenges are most acute in organizations wholly focused on in-depth investigative reporting, and start-up organizations that entered the market without significant initial funding.

To help address these needs, we have started an ongoing educational initiative focused on giving practical guidance in running a mission-driven news operation. Entitled "Audience Development & Distribution Strategies: A Primer for Nonprofit News Organizations," this first installment of our educational program took more than six months to produce, and encapsulated practical business knowledge gleaned from more than 50 interviews with foundations, outside media partners, and nonprofit organizations focused on informing the public.

INN also provided significant support in operational, technology and back-office areas. In addition to our successful media insurance program, we recently launched a health insurance portal that allows our member organizations to offer their staff and volunteers a wide-range of personal insurance products at competitive rates. We also provide free, best-practices-driven publishing and social media training and tools to help offset the small number of non-editorial resources across the network.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2012 and beyond, INN is focused on building upon these commitments and lessons learned. Our ultimate goal is to add more cost-saving, distribution and earned-revenue opportunities, coupled with forward-thinking and practical training to help members reach a predictable level of sustainability.

I need not remind anyone of the challenges facing journalism — and the nonprofit news movement in particular. The path to sustainability and the achievement of a viable place for nonprofit news within the greater media ecosystem face hurdles from multiple sources. Chief among them is a continued uphill battle to distribute members' work for revenue, a reliance on increasingly weak for-profit media partners, reduced sources for start-up funding for new nonprofits and an IRS that has made securing a necessary 501(c)(3) determination increasingly difficult.

Nevertheless, I deeply believe in the need for the nonprofit investigative and public-service news movement, and the power of INN to increase the viability of our member organizations, and to foster new nonprofit newsrooms that leverage the knowledge and services that we provide.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, and for your continued interest in our organization. It is an honor

to serve as the organization's inaugural CEO & executive director, and I look forward to keeping you informed on how we are furthering the nonprofit investigative and public-service journalism movement in the future.

Most sincerely,

**Kevin Davis**

CEO & Executive Director

# Accomplishments

In the past 18 months, INN has:

- \* Increased its membership to 64 members, a 60 percent increase from 2010. All are nonprofit, watchdog journalism organizations. Members are located in 27 states, as well as Puerto Rico and Canada. Members are producing editorial content using text, data, news applications, graphics, photography, audio and video reporting, on-air and in print. They have collaborated with more than 1,800 outside media partners across the network. We expect the number of organizations to be more than 70 by the end of this year.
- \* Launched its website, which posts all stories by members, nearly 100 each day, and automatically sorts them by topic. By the end of July 2012, the number of organizations utilizing the INN site metrics were up 100 percent, jumping from 1,295 to 2,578 unique visitors on average per month.
- \* Negotiated a media insurance program through ThinkRisk. This program has collectively saved participating members over \$150,000 in premiums, often with increased coverage over their previous carrier.
- \* Assumed management of The Hub ([www.npjhub.org](http://www.npjhub.org)), a free, online resource center for community-based and nonprofit newsrooms. This benefit has proven valuable to members in organizing and managing their operations and editorial work.
- \* Become fully staffed with the addition of an editorial director, a technology director and an engagement manager.

- \* Created a pilot partnership with Thomson-Reuters for worldwide syndication of members' stories. Currently, 34 members participate. The project allowed INN to test a distribution model while each member received free access to Thomson-Reuters America's Wire service and photo library, a monthly value of over \$4,000.
- \* Purchased access to the National Institute of Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) databases, for use by all INN member organizations.
- \* Worked to create a low-cost or pro bono legal assistance to members through the Digital Media Law Project (formerly the Citizen Media Law Project) at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard.
- \* Partnered with HealthInsurance.com to provide side-by-side comparison shopping for personal insurance products, including medical and dental insurance available to all member staff, freelancers and family members
- \* Launched, in partnership with the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR) in Berkeley, Calif., a news channel on YouTube: "I Files." CIR will produce and curate content for the channel, and INN will provide capacity-building planning, contract management and revenue-sharing support. INN will help promote the channel and engage the audience through social media and online chats. A generous grant from the Knight Foundation supports this project.
- \* Received the Manship Prize by Louisiana State University's Manship School of Journalism, recognizing encouragement of civic engagement through innovative media. This is only the second time in 10 years the prize was awarded to an organization rather than an individual, and INN is the first nonprofit organization to receive it.
- \* Added two experienced executives and journalists as public members of INN's board: Vivian Schiller of NBC Digital, and Neal Shapiro, president of WNET in New York City.

# Education

Providing ongoing educational programs to our members is a staple of INN's mission.

**In the past 18 months, we have offered training to help independent newsrooms improve their business practices and produce strong investigative reports.**

- ★ 'Audience Development and Distribution Strategies: A Primer for Nonprofit News Organizations,' was released by INN in March 2012. It examines strategies critical for nonprofit newsrooms to become sustainable ventures. Through in-depth interviews with leaders at foundations, journalists and editors at some of INN's 60 member organizations, and key players in the nonprofit media movement, the report offers tactics for increasing sustainability, developing an audience, and expanding reach for public-interest reporting.
- ★ Community Journalism Education and Training (CJET) has been developed to give smaller-sized members the tools to manage the business side of their operations. Building on a program developed by the Knight Digital Media Center at USC/Annenberg with help from the Patterson Foundation, members of both INN and Block-by-Block will take part in a three-day session this October in Los Angeles. Up to 40 participants from both INN and Block by Block will receive training in business tools and techniques to help them drive revenue, measure performance, and identify opportunities. This is supported by the Knight Foundation and will be an ongoing component of INN's educational offerings.
- ★ For the past two years, INN has staged a seminar on Best Practices for Nonprofit Newsrooms in conjunction with the Investigative Reporters and Editors' annual conference. These intense, one-day sessions covered a multitude of topics, including collaborations, risk management, membership generation, dataset usage, and video production.
- ★ As social media has become a key component of our members' work, INN stepped up to the plate with a series of web-based social media training seminars in the summer of 2012. This 11-week program, designed by INN's social media editor Jessica Plautz and Wisconsin Watch's Lauren Hasler, had 44 eager participants, and provided in-depth tutoring on all aspects of social media, including optimal use of analytics and development of strategy.
- ★ For the past two years, INN has hosted a members-only best business practices seminar prior to the Logan Symposium on investigative reporting, which is held on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. This seminar is an intense, highly participatory, two-day course in non-editorial aspects of running a nonprofit newsroom — financial, human resources, fundraising, and revenue-generating ideas. A grant from the Robert McCormick Foundation generously supported this effort.
- ★ INN began to work in the international arena, sponsoring a day-long program on covering corruption for the annual Congress of the International Press Institute, and beginning to advise international nonprofit newsrooms in business practices.



# INN's Outreach Efforts

INN's CEO Kevin Davis has promoted INN with a number of speaking engagements, putting a face on nonprofit newsrooms' efforts, and increasing public awareness of nonprofit investigative news. He testified on the state of nonprofit journalism at two regional FCC hearings, at the State Environmental Leadership Conference on changes in investigative journalism, at an Investigative Reporters and Editors conference on new technology, and on new business models in investigative reporting at a Colorado symposium.

He was also part of a panel on investigative reporting at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, and at the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance's panel, among others.



Brant Houston, INN's board chair, has championed INN from its very beginnings. In his role as Knight Chair of investigative journalism at the University of Illinois, and author or co-author of several definitive texts on investigative and computer-assisted reporting, he is a sought-after keynote speaker, panelist and instructor. In the past year, his work has taken him to international investigative conferences in Kiev, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg and Trinidad, and he has always incorporated the 21st century new journalism model of INN into his presentations.

# Collaborations

One of INN's core strengths is its unique ability to bring members together to produce investigative journalism. INN's 64 members range from large nonprofit newsrooms like ProPublica and NPR, to more locally-focused newsrooms such as Fair Warning in Los Angeles, Wisconsin Watch, and InvestigateWest in the Pacific Northwest. As these groups increasingly join forces to produce stories of significant social, political and environmental impact, a wealth of different voices are incorporated into these investigations, and a number of localized spinoff stories are created which "bring home" the issue to everyone's backyard.

INN's members have collaborated on a number of investigative reports. They include not only comprehensive national projects, such as airline safety, toxic communities, and campus sexual assault, but also on more localized efforts of vital interest to local communities, regions and states. These stories are often investigated in partnership with each other and also with local print, online and/or broadcast media. INN members' tireless reporting efforts have brought to light hundreds of issues, often uncovering the unexpected, sometimes creating systemic change in legislation or policy, and always informing the public in a fair, transparent, non-partisan manner.

# Deadly Patrols

INN members Texas Observer and Investigative Newsource in San Diego regularly cover U.S.-Mexican border issues. When INN learned that PBS magazine Need to Know was working on a story of a migrant who died — allegedly at the hands of several Border Patrol agents — INN contacted the producer about digging deeper and brokered a collaboration. The Texas Observer and Investigative Newsource agreed to help, and new INN member Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute was involved from the start.



PBS Need to Know footage

The resulting investigation uncovered a total of 14 deaths.

Along with Investigative Newsource's local partner KPBS, several stories were published in July 2012, and coincided with the Need to Know segment. The stories were co-branded and linked.

<http://www.investigativenetwork.org/news/undocumented-immigrant-shot-us-agent-recounts-terror-desert>

# Aviation Safety



Credit Robert Benincasa/NPR

A group of journalists working at eight nonprofit, investigative centers across the U.S. and at NPR took on the daunting task of reviewing the National Aviation Safety Agency's 150,000 confidential airline safety records, going back 20 years. To put the reports in context, the journalists did extensive data analysis and conducted interviews with pilots, air traffic controllers and aviation safety experts. This review of little-explored NASA records showed a wide variety of problems translated into more than 130 near-mishaps

and lapses reported on an average day, most happening unbeknownst to the flying public, or those living near airports. The investigation found instances of pilot fatigue, communications breakdowns, equipment failures, and a lack of private pilot training and experience as compared to commercial pilots.

Participating INN members were NPR, Investigative Newsource, Wisconsin Watch, Investigate West, New England Center for Investigative Reporting, Connecticut Health Investigative Team, Watchdog Institute, and the Rocky Mountain Center for Investigative Reporting.

<http://www.investigativenetwork.org/news/aviation-database-reveals-frequent-safety-problems-airports>

# 2011 Financial Summary

2011 Actuals

## Income

Foundation Grant/Income

Ethics & Excellence in Journalism	\$ 125,000
Knight Foundation	\$ 100,000
MacArthur	\$ 100,000
Open Society Institute	\$ 100,000
McCormick Foundation	\$ 78,000
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	\$ 70,000
Buzz Woolley	\$ 50,000
Atlantic Philanthropies	\$ 25,000
LSU Foundation (Manship Prize Money)	\$ 1,000
Other Donations	\$ 300

Total Foundation/Grant Income	<u>\$ 649,300</u>
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Rental Income (sublease)	\$ 6,074
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Interest	\$ 711
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Gross Profit	<u>\$ 656,085</u>
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## Expenses

Salaries - employees	\$ 385,434
Employee taxes & benefits	\$ 37,538
Consultants/contract labor	\$ 37,909
Insurance	\$ 16,115
Legal Fees	\$ 50,240
Marketing	\$ 1,074
Depreciation	\$ 996
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,517
Travel	\$ 36,233
Office Equipment & Supplies	\$ 13,997
Rent	\$ 18,110
Technology	\$ 36,502
Subtotal - Expense	<u>\$ 636,664</u>

Member distributions, services & editorial subsidies	\$ 3,000
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Total Expenses	<u>\$ 639,664</u>
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Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 16,421
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Balance Sheet (12/31/2011)	\$ 230,231
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Note: all figures preliminary and unaudited

# 2012 Financial Summary

2012 Actuals: Jan - June

## Income

### Foundation Grant/Income

Ethics & Excellence in Journalism	\$ 125,000
McCormick Foundation	\$ 125,000
MacArthur	\$ 100,000
Open Society Institute	\$ 100,000
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	\$ 70,000
Karin Winner	\$ 12,500
Other revenue	\$ 406

Total Foundation/Grant Income	<u>\$ 532,906</u>
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Rental Income (sublease)	\$ 4,263
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Interest	<u>\$ 216</u>
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Gross Profit	<u>\$ 537,385</u>
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## Expenses

Salaries - employees	\$ 271,323
Employee taxes & benefits	\$ 33,906
Consultants/contract labor	\$ 18,749
Insurance	\$ 10,960
Legal Fees	\$ 11,653
Marketing	\$ 2,474
Miscellaneous	\$ 927
Travel	\$ 24,549
Office Equipment & Supplies	\$ 3,174
Rent	\$ 12,114
Technology	\$ 36,605
Subtotal - Expense	<u>\$ 426,432</u>

Member distributions, services & editorial subsidies	\$ 32,400
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Total Expenses	<u>\$ 458,832</u>
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Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 78,553
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Balance Sheet (07/01/2012)	\$ 308,970
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Note: all figures preliminary and unaudited

# INN

## Board of Directors

**Brant Houston**, Chair of the Board  
& Knight Chair of Investigative  
Reporting, Journalism Department,  
College of Media, University of Illinois

**Charles Lewis**, Treasurer, Board  
Member & Executive Editor,  
Investigative Reporting Workshop,  
The American University School of  
Communication

**Robert Rosenthal**, Board Member  
& Executive Director, Center for  
Investigative Reporting

**William Buzenberg**, Secretary,  
Board Member & Executive Director,  
The Center for Public Integrity

**Laura Frank**, Board Member &  
Executive Director, I-News, The Rocky  
Mountain Investigative News Network

**Margaret Freivogel**, Board Member  
& Editor, St. Louis Beacon

**Vivian Schiller**, Board Member &  
Chief Digital Officer, NBC News

**Neal Shapiro**, Board Member &  
President and Chief Executive Officer,  
WNET

**Kevin Davis**, CEO & Executive  
Director, Investigative News Network

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# List of Funders

The following foundations and individuals supported the Investigative News Network in 2011 and 2012. We are tremendously grateful for their belief in our mission, and confidence in our ability to deliver.

- **John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**
- **Atlantic Philanthropies**
- **Buzz Woolley**
- **Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation**
- **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**
- **Robert R. McCormick Foundation**
- **Open Society Foundations**
- **Rockefeller Brothers Fund**
- **Karin Winner**

**INN's 990 for 2011 is available here:**

<http://bit.ly/inn-990-2011>

# Membership

1. **100Reporters**  
100r.org
2. **Alicia Patterson Foundation**  
aliciapatterson.org
3. **Aspen Journalism**  
aspenjournalism.org
4. **Broward Bulldog**  
browardbulldog.org
5. **Canadian Centre for Investigative Reporting**  
canadiancentreinvestigates.org
6. **Catalyst Chicago**  
www.catalyst-chicago.org
7. **Center for Investigative Reporting, including The Bay Citizen & California Watch**  
cironline.org
8. **Center for Public Integrity**  
www.publicintegrity.org
9. **Centro de Periodismo Investigativo**  
cpipr.org
10. **ChicagoTalks**  
www.chicagotalks.org
11. **City Limits, New York**  
www.citylimits.org
12. **Common Language Project**  
clpmag.org
13. **Connecticut Health Investigative Team**  
www.c-hit.org
14. **Education News, Colorado**  
www.ednews.org
15. **FairWarning**  
www.fairwarning.org
16. **Florida Center for Investigative Reporting**  
http://fcir.org
17. **Food and Environment Reporting**  
thefern.org
18. **G.W. Williams Center for Independent Journalism**  
www.tidescenter.org
19. **Health News Florida**  
www.healthnewsflorida.org
20. **i-team.tv**  
www.i-team.tv
21. **Initiative for Investigative Reporting at Northeastern University**  
www.northeastern.edu
22. **InSight Crime**  
www.insightcrime.org
23. **InvestigateWest**  
invw.org
24. **Investigative Newsource**  
www.inewsource.org
25. **Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University**  
investigativereportingworkshop.org
26. **Juvenile Justice Information Exchange, including Youth Today**  
jjie.org
27. **Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting**  
pinetreewatchdog.org
28. **MapLight**  
maplight.org
29. **Media Crime and Justice The Crime Report**  
thecrimereport.org
30. **Midwest Center for Investigative Journalism**  
www.investigatemidwest.org
31. **MinnPost.com**  
MinnPost.org

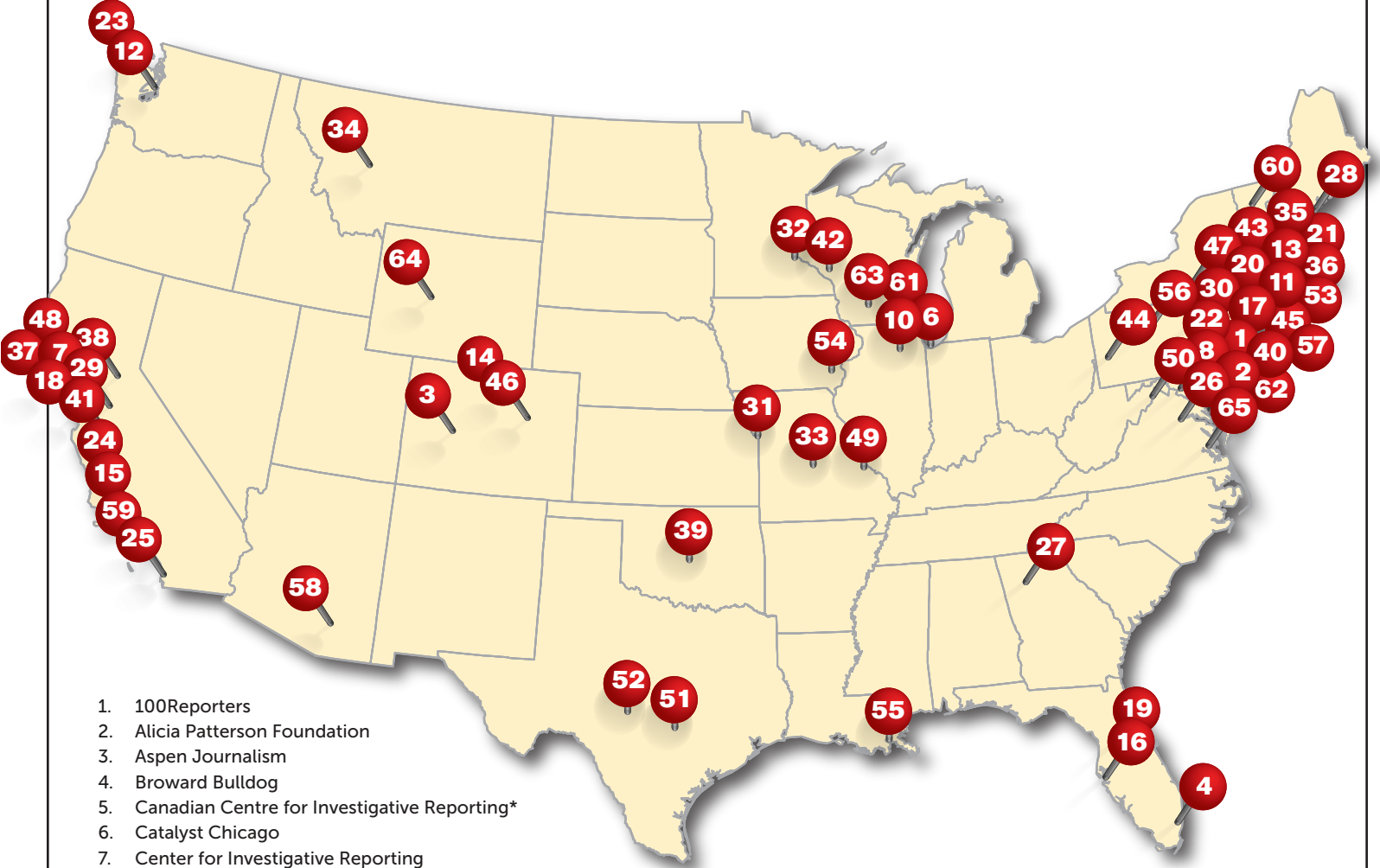
- 32. National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting**  
data.nicar.org
- 33. National Institute on Money in State Politics**  
www.followthemoney.org
- 34. New England Center for Investigative Reporting**  
necir-bu.org/wp
- 35. New Haven Independent**  
www.newhavenindependent.org
- 36. NewsDesk.org**  
www.newsdesk.org
- 37. NPR**  
www.npr.org
- 38. Oakland Local**  
oaklandlocal.com
- 39. Oklahoma Watch**  
oklahomawatch.org
- 40. Open Secrets**  
www.opensecrets.org
- 41. Pacific News Service/New America Media**  
newamericamedia.org
- 42. PIN/Spot.us**  
spot.us
- 43. ProPublica**  
www.propublica.org
- 44. PublicSource**  
publicsource.org
- 45. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting**  
www.pulitzercenter.org
- 46. Rocky Mountain Investigative News Network**  
inewsnetwork.org
- 47. Schuster Institute for Investigative Reporting**  
www.brandeis.edu/investigate
- 48. SFPublicPress**  
sfpublicpress.org
- 49. St. Louis Beacon**  
stlbeacon.org
- 50. Sunlight Foundation**  
sunlightfoundation.com
- 51. Texas Observer**  
www.texasobserver.org
- 52. The Austin Bulldog**  
www.theaustinbulldog.org
- 53. The Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute**  
www.theinvestigativefund.org
- 54. The Iowa Center for Public Affairs Reporting**  
www.iowawatch.org
- 55. The Lens**  
thelensnola.org
- 56. The Philadelphia Public School Notebook**  
www.thenotebook.org
- 57. Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Reporting**  
stabilecenter.org
- 58. TucsonSentinel.com**  
www.tucsonsentinel.com
- 59. Voice of San Diego**  
www.voiceofsandiego.org
- 60. VTDigger**  
vtdigger.org
- 61. WBEZ, 91.5 Chicago Public Media**  
www.wbez.org
- 62. Women's eNews**  
womensenews.org
- 63. Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism**  
www.wisconsinwatch.org
- 64. WyoFile**  
wyofile.com



INVESTIGATIVE NEWS NETWORK

# MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

The Investigative News Network (INN) is devoted to providing investigative and public service journalism in a new media environment. A consortium of more than 60 nonprofit news organizations, INN members' reporting ranges from local to national to international issues. The Network's mission is to develop and sustain through its members the highest quality watchdog journalism to benefit a free society.



1. 100Reporters
2. Alicia Patterson Foundation
3. Aspen Journalism
4. Broward Bulldog
5. Canadian Centre for Investigative Reporting\*
6. Catalyst Chicago
7. Center for Investigative Reporting
8. Center for Public Integrity
9. Centro de Periodismo Investigativo\*
10. ChicagoTalks
11. City Limits, New York
12. Common Language Project
13. Connecticut Health Investigative Team
14. Education News Colorado
15. FairWarning
16. Florida Center for Investigative Reporting
17. Food and Environment Reporting Network
18. G.W. Williams Center for Independent Journalism
19. Health News Florida
20. i-team.tv
21. Initiative for Investigative Reporting at Northeastern University
22. InSight Crime
23. InvestigateWest
24. Investigative News Network
25. Investigative Newsource
26. Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University
27. Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

28. Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting
29. Maplight
30. Media Crime and Justice The Crime Report
31. Midwest Center for Investigative Journalism
32. MinnPost.com
33. National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting
34. National Institute on Money in State Politics
35. New England Center for Investigative Reporting
36. New Haven Independent
37. NewsDesk.org
38. Oakland Local
39. Oklahoma Watch
40. Open Secrets
41. Pacific News Service/New America Media
42. PIN/Spot.us
43. ProPublica
44. PublicSource
45. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting
46. Rocky Mountain Investigative News Network
47. Schuster Institute for Investigative Reporting

48. SF Public Press
49. St. Louis Beacon
50. Sunlight Foundation
51. Texas Observer
52. The Austin Bulldog
53. The Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute
54. The Iowa Center for Public Affairs Reporting
55. The Lens
56. The Philadelphia Public School Notebook
57. Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Reporting
58. TucsonSentinel.com
59. Voice of San Diego
60. VTDigger
61. WBEZ Chicago
62. Women's eNews
63. Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism
64. WyoFile
65. Youth Today

\*Not mapped