



McCormick Specialized Reporting Institutes Letter of Inquiry Submission Guidelines

The McCormick Foundation (MF) invites non-profit 501(c)3 organizations to submit letters of inquiry (LOI) to conduct a McCormick Foundation Specialized Reporting Institute (SRI). These intensive journalism workshops provide subject-specific expertise and practical reporting training in timely, specialized topics of importance to media consumers. Some topics are initiated and solicited by the Foundation. However, the Journalism Program welcomes unsolicited letters of inquiry for topics that may be of interest to working journalists.

The growing appetite for specialized training on emerging news issues is in recognition of widespread newsroom layoffs and deep cutbacks in media training budgets. At the same time, many of the hot button issues are complicated and sophisticated. The projects aim to equip reporters and editors with the kind of specialized information they need to cover sophisticated, timely stories. Please see the attached list of previous SRIs for sample agendas and programs.

The goal is to arm participants with an expanded source network, valuable reference materials and a list of solid story ideas. The SRIs will offer participants the opportunity to meet like-minded colleagues, provide “grounding” for generalists to tackle timely emerging issues and rekindle enthusiasm for veteran beat reporters. We’re especially interested in engaging community and ethnic reporters in the SRIs, as well as in projects that incorporate new tools and technology to share the resources and information that come out of the events.

Typically, Specialized Reporting Institutes:

- Receive grants of \$35,000-\$50,000.
- Are organized and administered by a managing partner. The selected grantee is responsible for planning and administering the program from start to finish.
- Are titled, “McCormick Specialized Reporting Institute: XXXXX (Topic)”
- Last two to three days
- Convene 15-20 working journalists from all media types, particularly from mid-size markets.
- Require participants to submit an application consisting of a resume, supervisor nomination letter, three work samples and a short essay for consideration.
- Cover all or most of journalists’ travel, lodging and tuition costs.
- Feature speaking and discussion sessions and a practical/simulated reporting component or reporting field trip, if applicable.
- Feature a diverse faculty of topic experts and professionals and journalists who excel in covering the topic.
- Encourage participants to generate stories and ideas based on the workshop. They also are encouraged to host a brown bag or newsroom training session for colleagues.

- Are located at the managing partner's city or at an appropriate travel-friendly location relevant to the topic.
- Reflect diversity in participants, news organizations and faculty.
- Are supported primarily by MF.
- Have a four month to six month planning cycle.
- Are evaluated both during the institute and three months to six months later.

Letter of Inquiry (LOI) Guidelines

To apply for funding to serve as a managing partner for a McCormick Foundation Specialized Reporting Institute in 2010, please fill out the [application cover sheet](#) and submit an LOI of no more than two pages that describes:

- The topic, its timeliness and the need for specialized education for journalists
- The organization's qualifications to organize and host the event
- Potential programming ideas, sessions and faculty
- Proposed cost and tentative budget

The deadline for consideration is **November 13, 2009**. You will receive a confirmation that we have received your application. The Journalism Program will contact the organization if it needs more information. Please send LOIs electronically to:

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Recent Specialized Reporting Institutes

2007

Foundation for American Communications
Covering the Hidden Economy: Philanthropy and the Nonprofit Sector
May 16-18, 2007
Wheaton, Illinois
2 days
20 journalists
\$50,000

International Reporting Project, Johns Hopkins University
Covering Homeland Security
May 20-23, 2007
Washington D.C.
15 journalists
3 days
\$50,000

Drake University, School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Covering the Presidential Nominating Process
June 4-6, 2007
Des Moines, Iowa
2 days
23 journalists
\$50,000

National Press Foundation
Presidential Campaign 2008 - Preparing Journalists to Cover the Candidates' Healthcare Plans
Nov. 11-14, 2007
Washington D.C.
3.5 days
18 journalists
\$50,000

2008

Poynter Institute
Covering War at Home

May 19-21, 2008
St. Petersburg, Fla.
3 days
20 journalists
\$50,000

Ohio State University: Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Reporting
Climate Change Conference
Oct. 12-14, 2008
Columbus, Ohio
3 days
28 journalists
\$50,000

Journalism Center on Children & Families, University of Maryland
Communities in Flux: The Impact of Economic Turmoil and Shifting Demographics
Nov. 16-18, 2008
Chicago, Ill
2.5 days
20 journalists
\$50,000

2009

Washington State University
Reporting in Virtual Spaces
April 6, 2009
Pullman, Wash.
1 day
12 journalists (24 additional journalists attended online)
\$45,000

University of Tennessee
Specialized Reporting Institute on Nuclear Energy
July 16-18, 2009
Knoxville, Tenn.
3 days
12 journalists
\$48,000

DePaul University
An Inside Look at Chicago's Bid for the 2016 Olympics
September 13-15, 2009
Chicago, Ill.
3 days
26 journalists
\$50,000

Ohio State University: Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Reporting
McCormick Energy Solutions Conference

Oct. 20-22, 2009
Columbus, Ohio
3 days
30 journalists
\$50,000

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Census 2010 Bootcamp
Oct 26-28, 2009
Ann Arbor, Mich.
3 days
\$47,000