



Monthly newsletter highlights work of FIJ grant recipients

FROM SANDY BERGO, FIJ Executive Director

The Fund for Investigative Journalism is kicking off a monthly newsletter to showcase the groundbreaking work produced by investigative journalists working with our grants.

By providing money to cover travel and expenses, FIJ enables grantees to tackle ambitious investigative stories that might otherwise go uncovered. We're excited to share some of their work.

Earlier this week, we closed the application period for our current round of grants. In the next few weeks, we will sift through those applications, seeking opportunities to support ambitious, high-impact projects across the country and the world.

FIJ's monthly newsletter will feature links to recently completed projects and update you about other endeavors, such as the Ford Foundation-funded diversity initiative we are launching with the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism.

This summer, we made the rounds at journalism conferences, including gatherings of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American journalists to spread the word about our grant and fellowship opportunities.

We hope you will join us in raising awareness of FIJ's work and its mission to support independent investigative reporting.

Next application deadline: Monday, Feb. 6, 2017

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTH

FIJ grant recipients shed light on range of topics – from foster care and religion to political money

Foster care system

in crisis: With no place else to take foster children, social workers in Washington state's Puget Sound area have increasingly resorted to housing them in hotels at night, then babysitting them in child welfare offices during the day. As InvestigateWest reported, in partnership with "Crosscut" and KCTS Television, the state has grown so desperate that it pays some foster parents up to \$325 a night – more than 10 times the normal rate. Because there are no foster families to take them, some children spend nights at group facilities for runaways and youths with severe mental health problems. State officials concede the system is in "crisis."



Angelique Kelley (center) was fortunate to have been adopted as a teen out of foster care. But the scars of her 17 moves in foster care remain. (Photo by Paul Joseph Brown/InvestigateWest)

Religious nonprofits lag in diversity efforts: While some evangelicals might dismiss talk about diversity, others say it's a theological imperative. Steve Rabey, writing for Religion News Service and the Colorado Springs Gazette, reports that women and people of color aren't well represented in the leadership ranks of so-called parachurches — the thousands of religious nonprofit groups involved in various forms of Christian ministry.

Conviction review units seek to fix 'broken justice system': Concern over people being wrongly imprisoned has prompted

the rise of conviction review units across the country, now in 24 jurisdictions nationwide, from Los Angeles to Philadelphia. But as Christopher Ketcham reports in CounterPunch, the attempt by prosecutors to self-police may be little more than a stopgap measure in what he and others call a broken justice system.

Authorities sometimes lose track of probation and parole

violators: As Liz Navratil reported for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, federal data show more than 4 million people in the United States are on parole, probation or similar programs. In 2014, more than 350,000 returned to jail, nearly 100,000 of them for new



A federal agent in Pima County, Arizona, assists in the arrest of Antonio Alejandro Garcia, who was wanted for a probation violation. (Photo by Andrew Rush, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

crimes. Research shows that addressing violations quickly reduces the probability that probationers and parolees will go on to commit new crimes. Yet, agencies across the country often lose track of probation and parole violators, sometimes leading to horrendous consequences.

Big money pours into San Francisco politics: The role of money is looming larger in San Francisco politics, where nearly \$28 million flowed into campaigns last year. In partnership with the TV Archive, a project of the Internet Archive, the San Francisco Public Press examined how the money was spent and analyzed the "half-truths and slanted narratives" being peddled by campaigns. Surprisingly, much of the money spent in the tech-savvy city was for old-school campaign tactics: mailers and television spots.