



WisconsinWatch.org

**WISCONSIN CENTER FOR
INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM**

**REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS
NOVEMBER 2016**



WHO WE ARE

Reliable information that holds the powerful accountable is essential to our democracy. But investigative journalism is at risk: News organizations are cutting staffs as traditional sources of revenue decline. The Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism is countering those problems with its replicable, collaborative nonprofit model.

The Center increases the quality and quantity of investigative reporting in Wisconsin while training current and future journalists. Our work fosters an informed citizenry and strengthens democracy. A nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization, the Center focuses on government integrity and quality of life issues including the environment, economy, justice system, education and health.

Our guiding values: Protect the vulnerable. Expose wrongdoing. Seek solutions.

Since July 2009, the Center has produced nearly 300 major news reports that have been cited, published or broadcast by more than 500 newspapers, radio and TV stations and news websites in Wisconsin and nationwide. The estimated audience of the Center's reports exceeds 56 million people.

The Center seeks to collaborate with, rather than simply compete against, other news organizations to maximize the use of resources. Reports are fact-checked to ensure accuracy and distributed free to news organizations, who are permitted to edit the stories or add their own reporting to meet the needs of their audiences.

Housed in the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the Center has a staff of four full-time professional journalists, several paid student interns who work as investigative reporters and public engagement and marketing assistants, part-time staff members and skilled volunteers who assist in journalistic and financial operations. The Center also collaborates with journalism classes, its partners at Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television, and news organizations nationwide. A nationally recognized board of directors, including experts in investigative journalism, nonprofit journalism and nonprofit financial management, determines policies, while day-to-day operations are handled by the staff.



Solitary confinement in state prisons is a topic the Center continues to cover in 2016. Advocate Talib Akbar (left) spent time in solitary and now works to raise awareness about the controversial practice. Coburn Dukehart/WCIJ

HIGHLIGHTS

Our journalistic and business operations are advancing.

GREAT JOURNALISM: In recent months, the Center released groundbreaking investigations that reached every corner of the state on topics including Wisconsin's drinking water, solitary confinement in the state's prisons, controversial debt buying practices and gun violence among young people. We produce in-depth investigations that are not yet being covered around the state, prompting discussions on issues that are important to the people of Wisconsin.

INNOVATION: Over the past year, we have told our stories in new and inventive ways. We created explanatory GIFs using sand and stop-motion photography to explain Wisconsin's frac sand mining industry. We commissioned artist Carrie Roy to create sculptures that bring complicated statistics on Wisconsin's groundwater contamination to life. We took the pieces on a seven-day tour across the state. And soon we will begin producing documentaries.

HONORS: In May 2016, the Center was honored with six gold awards and two bronze, including the gold for best investigative story or series, in the Milwaukee Press Club's annual Awards for Excellence in Wisconsin Journalism contest. The Center has won 40 awards from the Milwaukee Press Club since 2011. In February 2016, the Center received the State Bar of Wisconsin's highest journalistic award, the 2015 Golden Gavel, for its coverage of Wisconsin's efforts to reduce the use of solitary confinement.

STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM: We have enhanced our capacities to produce superb journalism and training while assembling our finest development, public engagement and business team. We hired the Center's co-founder, Dee J. Hall, as managing editor to lead the Center's news operations. With the hiring of University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate Coburn Dukehart, formerly a senior photo editor at National Geographic, to become our Digital and Multimedia Director, and Bridgit Bowden as Wisconsin Public Radio's Mike Simonson Memorial Investigative Reporting Fellow, we expanded our capacity to reach broader audiences across the state and the nation.

SERVING WISCONSIN NEWSROOMS: The Center's reporting fills a void. Some newsrooms have been cut in half — or more — in the past decade as the news business has experienced a catastrophic loss of revenue. As media outlets across the state shrink, the capacity of Wisconsin journalists to delve deeply into complex problems has diminished. The Center's reports fill gaps in crucial coverage areas.



Managing Editor Dee J. Hall and reporting intern Abigail Becker work on fact-checking an upcoming investigation. Bridgit Bowden/WCIJ

TRAINING YOUNG JOURNALISTS: The Center is an important training ground for current and future generations of investigative journalists. More than two dozen students have served internships or done full-time freelance work with the Center, and in 2015, the Center hired its first public engagement and marketing intern to assist with business operations. We will continue our collaboration with the UW-Madison School of Journalism and Mass Communication to hire students for our investigative reporting and marketing internships and offer our expertise through guest lectures and teaching investigative reporting courses.

FUNDRAISING: The Center continues to receive contributions from national, statewide and local foundations as well as individual donors. Most recently, the Center enlisted two senior executives with distinguished careers in philanthropy, management and journalism to our development team, now led by Associate Director Lauren Fuhrmann, to strengthen the Center's ability to generate revenue.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP: The Center has distinguished itself as a leader of state-focused nonprofit investigative reporting, ethics, financial transparency, content distribution, metrics and impact tracking. The Center's leadership in these activities is largely responsible for national funders' continuing support as we share our knowledge with other organizations. On the state level, three key Center figures serve on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, promoting public access to the workings of government, and Fuhrmann serves as vice president of the Madison Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

MAJOR INVESTIGATIONS



FAILURE AT THE FAUCET

The Center began collaborating with students in 2015 to investigate a variety of contaminants that can be found in drinking water across Wisconsin, including bacteria and lead.



CRUEL AND UNUSUAL?

The Center investigated allegations of abuse of inmates by prison guards and use of solitary confinement in Wisconsin's prisons, which has been likened to torture.



PRECIOUS LIVES

A partnership with multiple news organizations in Milwaukee, this award-winning series continues to look at the effects and costs of gun violence on Wisconsin's young people.



SCOTT WALKER'S WISCONSIN

Stories examined Scott Walker's time as governor of Wisconsin — the effects of his policies on public sector unions, job creation, public records and the environment.



EXOTIC AND EXPLOITED?

Just as the "Milwaukee lion" was making headlines, reporter Haley Henschel published an investigation into how the state's lax animal laws create a haven for exotic pet owners.



CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND

Reporter Abigail Becker explored reasons for faltering performance and ways to improve the state of education for Wisconsin's poor children and students of color.

IMPACT

When we talk about the work of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism, we often discuss the impact our investigations have. Here are recent examples of impact.

- Amid uproar following the discovery of state budget language that would have gutted the open records law in Wisconsin, Managing Editor Dee J. Hall reported that Gov. Scott Walker and GOP leaders decided to remove the provisions from the budget. Hall found similarities between wording in the budget and recent records request denials from the governor's office and the state Department of Administration, fueling speculation — later confirmed — that the proposed changes had come straight from Walker's office. These stories remind us of the importance of open government and barriers reporters and citizens face in understanding what elected leaders are doing and how tax money is being spent. During the controversy, Executive Director Andy Hall spoke out in the Center's newsletter and national accounts published in *Columbia Journalism Review* and *USA Today*.

- In a version of Sean Kirkby's report, "Hundreds hurt, killed when Wisconsin teens get guns," published by the *Superior Telegram*, the newspaper's editors localized the story to include an anecdote from their community, making the issue more relevant to northern Wisconsin.

- As the search for the "Milwaukee lion" made national headlines in summer 2015, calls for stricter legislation regarding exotic pet ownership were being broadcast across the state. In July, Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, proposed a bill that would prohibit private possession, sale and propagation of a number of exotic animals. Reporter Haley Henschel's comprehensive investigation of the state's lax animal laws came at a crucial time, raising awareness about the particulars of Wisconsin's laws and fueling calls for action and discussions in the legislature.

- The Center's 2014-16 reports on the treatment of inmates in state prisons resulted in heightened scrutiny of the Department of Corrections' practices and pressure from activists to reform policies related to solitary and administrative confinement. In June 2016, the Center reported on the launch of an inmate hunger strike protesting long-term confinement practices.

- Most commonly, the Center's impact manifests itself in raising awareness about underreported issues and serving as a catalyst for conversations and continued reporting from news organizations across the state. So far in 2016, the Center's reports on frac sand mining, state prisons, drinking water and Scott Walker's administration have been referenced in numerous follow-up reports and newspaper editorials. The Center's in-depth reports often serve to frame emerging topics in the media landscape that are followed up on by daily news organizations.



Bridgit Bowden, WPR reporting fellow, featured Sandra Goodwin (pictured above) in her investigation of controversial debt buying practices. Coburn Dukehart/WCIJ

FAILURE AT THE FAUCET

- We are investigating risks to Wisconsin's drinking water in collaboration with UW-Madison journalism students and faculty members. In the past year, the series has reached nearly four million people and that audience continues to grow as we release new stories.

- Gov. Scott Walker has commented on the Center's drinking water reports, saying that his administration takes them seriously.

- The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters cited Failure at the Faucet in a statement opposing a bill that would have eased privatization of community water supplies.

- Newspapers in Mount Horeb, Stoughton, Verona, Plymouth, Waunakee, Lake Mills and Eau Claire have followed up with water utility administrators about the presence of lead pipes in their communities.

- We found that lead in drinking water, which ignited a public health crisis in Flint, Michigan, is largely ignored as a potential contributor to elevated blood lead levels in thousands of Wisconsin children, although drinking water flows through an estimated 176,000 lead service lines to homes in places including Milwaukee, Watertown and Racine, plus Buffalo, Sheboygan, Rock, Green Lake and Pepin counties. Two Democratic lawmakers from Madison and Milwaukee proposed a bill that would require the state to conduct tap water testing when a child is lead poisoned. Madison Rep. Chris Taylor said the proposal came in response to the Center's ongoing series.

AUDIENCE METRICS

We are proud of the broad reach of our news coverage, a record that few comparable news organizations can match. With online research from services such as Meltwater and the Wisconsin Newspaper Association's News Tracker (the latter provided in-kind by WNA), we have compiled in-depth metrics on how our stories flow through Wisconsin and across the nation.

2015 - 2016

January 1, 2015 to October 31, 2016

56 major reports

3,051 pickups, mentions, follow-up reports, columns/editorials and localized reports

2,405 pickups

439 mentions

14 follow-up reports

127 columns/editorials

8 localized reports

21.6 million total estimated audience

16.5 million in print

5.1 million online

270 news organizations published or cited our work

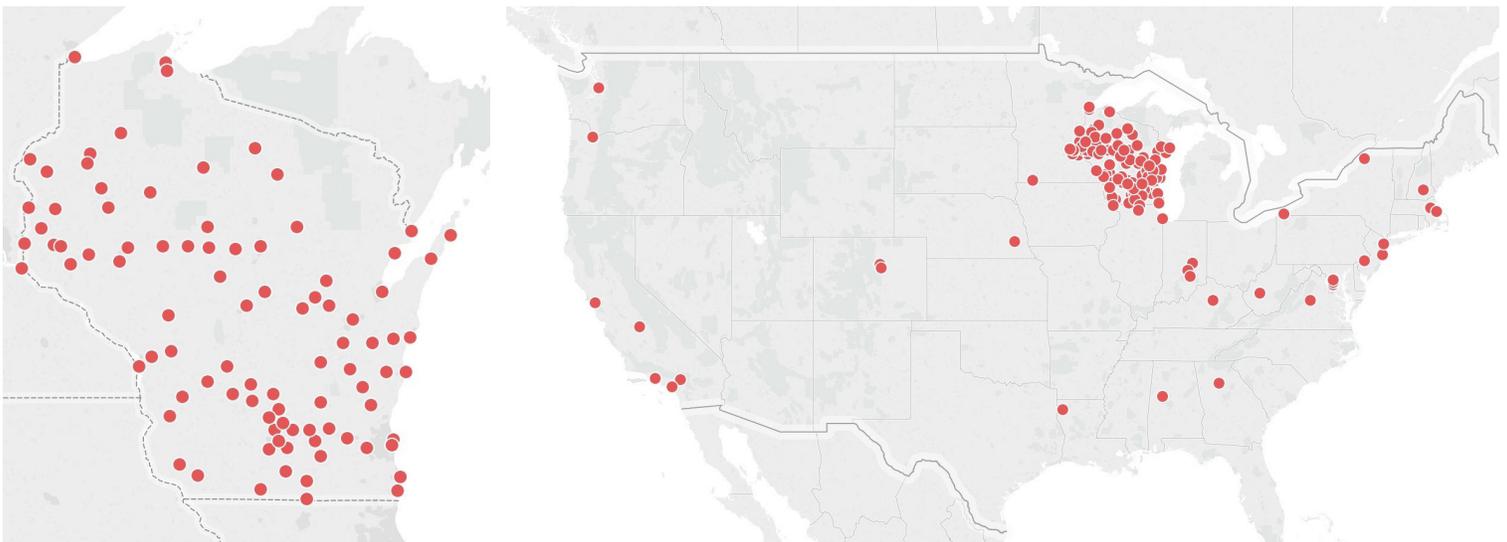


Alexandra Arriaga/WCIJ



Recent stories focused on voting rights on campuses (top) and a literacy program that provides free books when children come in for medical checkups. Coburn Dukehart/WCIJ

WHERE THE CENTER'S STORIES ARE USED



These maps show the locations of news organizations in Wisconsin and across the United States that published or cited the Center's work from January 1, 2015 to October 16, 2016.

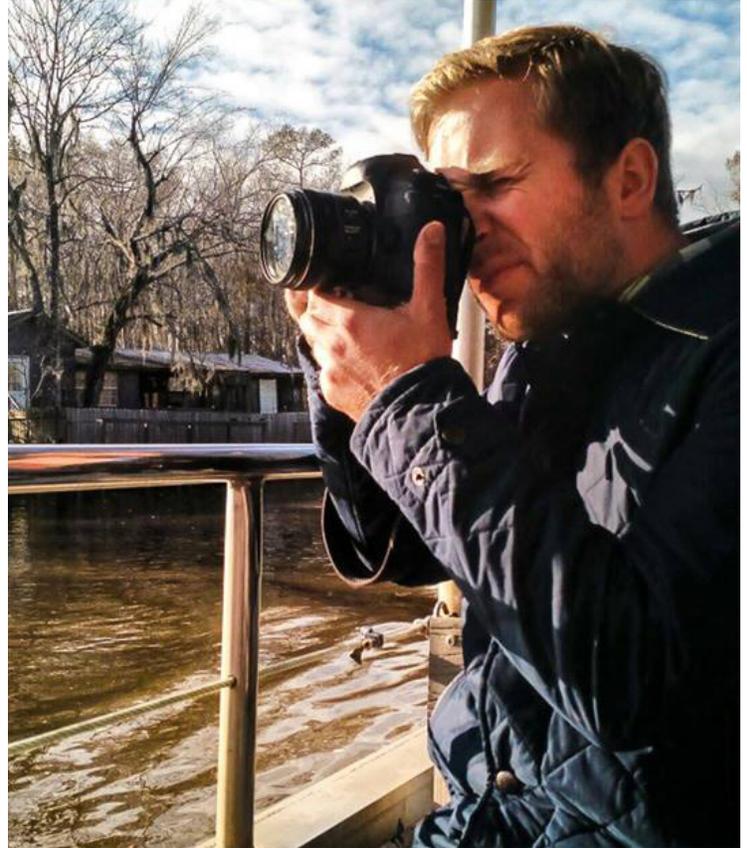
OUR INTERNS

Our reporting interns work on the front lines of journalism. They write and produce high-impact investigative pieces on government integrity and quality-of-life issues. Our business internships give students hands-on experience in social media marketing, business development and audience metrics tracking.

Center interns aren't out getting coffee and running errands. They're in the field, conducting interviews and getting records. They receive intensive training and work closely with Center staff and partners at Wisconsin Public Television, Wisconsin Public Radio and other news organizations.

We often crow about the great work by our interns, but they're also doing amazing things after their internships. They're getting jobs, no slight accomplishment in this market — and good ones. Our more than two-dozen former interns are active in print, online and broadcast journalism around Wisconsin, the U.S. and the world. From Green Bay and Appleton, Wisconsin, to California, Montana, Washington, New York, Russia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Kenya, our former interns take the skills they learned at the Center and apply them while working around the globe.

For many of them, working at the Center served as a gateway to future opportunities. Recently, Mario Koran (2012-13) was named Journalist of the Year by the San Diego Society of Professional Journalists, Nick Penzenstadler (2010) broke a major news story for USA TODAY about lawsuits involving Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, and Tegan Wendland's (2012-14) reporting on the Louisiana flooding was featured on National Public Radio.



"The staff at WCJW pushed me to think about stories and storytelling on a deeper level than more traditional news outlets. After my internship I was able to think of new story angles and ideas that went beyond the surface to become meaningful and impactful," said former intern Lukas Keapproth (2012), pictured above. He now works as a photographer in Austin, Texas.



Sara Jerving (2010), pictured above reporting on the expansion of the palm oil sector in Liberia, now works as an associate producer for HBO's Emmy-Award winning newsmagazine VICE.



Jacob Kushner (2009) now works as a freelance journalist reporting from Africa, the Caribbean and Germany. His work has appeared in The New York Times, National Geographic and Newsweek.



Tegan Wendland (2012-14) currently works as a reporter at the local NPR affiliate in New Orleans, where she covers the environment, industry, fisheries and all things coastal.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2016 budget: **\$500,000**

Goal: **\$1 million**

The Center was co-founded by award-winning investigative journalists Andy and Dee J. Hall in January 2009. Its initial budget was about \$150,000. Today the Center's budget is about \$500,000. We aim to grow to about \$1 million to more fully accomplish our journalistic and training mission while building a more sustainable and resilient financial base.

The Center is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that is funded through grants, donations and sponsorships from foundations, corporations and individuals, as well as earned income it receives for producing stories and training journalists. As a matter of policy, funders exercise no control over the Center's editorial decisions, and all funders are publicly identified, to protect the integrity of our journalism. We publish a list of our supporters, tax documents and audited financial statements on our website.



In an audio recording training, intern Haley Henschel explains to Tara Golshan what she had for breakfast. Kate Golden/WCIJ

MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation
Foundation to Promote Open Society
The Joyce Foundation
Evjue Foundation
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism
Education
Vital Projects Fund

Peters Family Foundation
Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation
Walt Bogdanich
Marcus and Sheila Cohen
Larry Hands and Karen Kendrick-Hands
Phil Hands
Dick Record
Irene Schapiro

...and more than 150 additional individuals, corporations and foundations across the nation.

Visit WisconsinWatch.org to read our stories and make a gift to the Center.



Student journalists and young professional reporters attend a free investigative reporting workshop prior to the sixth annual Wisconsin Watchdog Awards in April. Jentri Colello/WCIJ