

InvestigativePost

Financial transparency policy

Here at Investigative Post, we believe in transparency - for ourselves, as well as those we cover.

Below you'll find frequently asked questions on the financial aspects of our operation, including how we handle donations. Contact us if you have a question that's not addressed.

What is Investigative Post?

We're a non-profit investigative reporting center focused on issues of importance to Buffalo and Western New York. We have a two-fold mission: to produce high-quality investigative reporting and analyses and train young journalists in public service journalism.

We're one of about 50 non-profit investigative reporting centers in the nation and the only one in Upstate New York.

How does Investigative Post fund its operation?

Through a combination of donations and the sale of content to media partners.

Our major philanthropic funders so far include foundations and individuals who recognize the value of watchdog journalism.

Media partners who purchase our content include WGRZ TV and Artvoice.

Do you disclose the names of your donors?

Yes; we do not accept anonymous donations. We believe it is essential that readers know who is providing the funds that pay for our operation.

The Investigative News Network, the trade organization we belong to, requires its members to disclose donations of \$1,000 or more. We've taken it a step further with this thought in mind: New York State election law requires politicians to disclose donations of \$50 or more. Given that Investigative Post is in business partly to hold politicians accountable, we think it's important that we're as transparent as candidates when it comes to disclosing our donors. In fact, we've gone a step further: not one dime goes unreported.

We announce donations of \$5,000 at the time we receive them and periodically report all donations on our website. A list of donations made during 2012 can be found in our annual report.

Do you accept anyone as a donor?

No. We do not accept donations from political parties, elected officials, special interest groups or others whose donations would raise legitimate questions about the independence and integrity of our coverage.

What influence do your donors have on the stories you write?

None. Neither donors nor anyone else outside our newsroom assigns, writes or edits our content.

We're happy to take news tips from a donor, as we do any member of the public, but that's as far as it goes.

Donors do not buy immunity from coverage, nor the right to ask Investigative Post to "call off the dogs" - or, in our case, watchdogs.

Members of the Investigative Post board of directors are not apprised of stories before they run, although Heaney sometimes uses Board President Lee Coppola, a former investigative reporter himself, as a sounding board.

So what's in it for donors?

Of course, you'll have the satisfaction of helping to build a vital community institution that provides Buffalo and Western New York with watchdog journalism and trains young journalists to do likewise.

But your membership donation also gives you an insider's perspective on what's happening in Western New York and why. Whether you're taking advantage of discounted tickets to our event series or accessing our members-only newsletter, you'll always be in the know.

For those giving \$1,000 or more, you'll receive an autographed copy of a limited edition cartoon drawn exclusively for Investigative Post by Tom Toles. If you give more than \$5,000, your Toles cartoon will be custom framed and autographed with a personal message.

A full description of our member perks can be found at our website, under 'Donate.'

How can I donate?

Donations can be made with a credit card online or by writing a check made out to Investigative Post Inc. and mailing it to us at 392 Pearl St., Suite 301, Buffalo, NY 14202.

We accept one-time or sustaining donations. We especially encourage sustaining donations—ongoing, automatic contributions through secure monthly payments—because sustaining members provide dependable funding and reduce administration costs.

Are donations tax-deductable?

Yes. Investigative Post has an application pending with the Internal Revenue Service seeking approval as a 501(c)(3) corporation. While we await approval, we have engaged Innovative Charitable Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) as our fiscal agent, ensuring that contributions by U.S. taxpayers are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.