

# WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## POOL REPORTS DIGITAL ARCHIVES PROJECT

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

JULY 2016

#### *INTRODUCTION*

The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) is a non-profit, IRS recognized 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to ensure a strong free press and robust coverage of the presidency by advocating for access by the media to the President, White House events and administration officials. Our members include print, television, wire service, radio and online reporters and photographers who cover the White House as their regular beat. We also work to encourage new generations of White House correspondents through our college scholarship program.

*Through this Request for Proposal, the WHCA seeks a university partner to create a permanent and ongoing, searchable archive of the presidential pool reports produced by and released to White House correspondents. This will be a major and important undertaking to preserve the work of our members and make a meaningful contribution to historians, political scientists, fellow journalists and the public at large. This partnership also may extend to cover the inclusion of presidential general election pool reports, either at the inception of the project or over time.*

Thanks to the efforts of two long-time WHCA members, we possess every print pool report of the Obama presidency and the vast majority of pool reports dating back to September 11, 2001 during President George W. Bush's presidency. These pool reports exist in individual email format and are saved on storage drives. In addition, the WHCA is in the process of identifying other sources of collected pool reports from earlier time periods, primarily from the administration of President Bill Clinton. Some of these pool reports may exist in paper format.

The presidential print pool reports document the day-to-day, and in some cases the hour-to-hour activities of the President of the United States as witnessed by journalists covering the White House. In President Obama's case, the pool reports cover everything from his tours of the Egyptian pyramids and the Great Wall of China to his golf partners; details from the night Osama bin Laden was killed; a fundraiser at actor George Clooney's home; a weekend day when the pool was hastily called back because the president was being taken to Walter Reed medical center with throat pain that was later determined to be acid reflux; and Air Force One's historic arrival in Cuba. These pool reports are a first-hand account of news and represent the first page in the history of the various presidents that have served in the White House.

## ***PROJECT OBJECTIVES***

The WHCA seeks to partner with a major university with a proven record of presidential scholarship and an academic commitment to the teaching of journalism to help the WHCA accomplish the following objectives:

- Create a permanent digital archive of past WHCA pool reports and an on-going archive of all future pool reports on a dedicated web-based site that will be widely accessible and searchable by journalists, academic researchers, and the public at large.
- The archive will be searchable by keywords or phrases, date, president and name of author and news organization. Ease of access should be considered as an essential factor in developing a proposal. The proposal should reflect a commitment to the goal of demonstrating the importance of this historical record by making it as accessible as possible.
- Develop in partnership with the WHCA an educational component related to pool reports and presidential access and coverage. This may include articles, graphics and featured pool reports culled by historians, academics and journalists to appear on the archive's website or in independent publications; and the hosting of conferences to include input and participation by WHCA members.

## ***SCOPE***

Four types of pool reports are distributed to members: Print pool and foreign press pool, which are distributed to a broad list; and network and radio pool reports that include video and sound, which are distributed internally to those groups. Only the print pool reports, and a more limited occurrence of foreign press pool reports from the Oval Office, are envisioned for the archives project at this time. While the WHCA has not assessed the existing number of print pool reports, it is likely in the hundreds of thousands. The WHCA envisions a two-track process for building the database; (1) creating a process inputting and searching past pool reports; (2) creating a mechanism for incorporating into the digital archive in a timely fashion future pool reports.

## ***PROJECT SPECIFICS***

The WHCA seeks a proposal that will address the followings:

- *With respect to the Digital Archive* – a plan for the creation, supervision, maintenance, and updating of a web-based digital archive of past and future White House pool reports. The proposal shall identify the appropriate university staff (a designated academic professional) who will be the principal liaison with the WHCA Board of Directors and primarily responsible and accountable for the development and implementation of the overall proposed program. It also should

include a plan to staff the data entry components of the archives with dedicated employees, rotating students or a combination of the two.

- A proposed budget adequate to build and maintain on an annual basis the dedicated website. The budget should reflect costs associated not only with the maintenance of current pool reports, but the costs associated with collecting and adding new pool reports as they become available.
- A timeline for the development and operational implementation of the digital archive.
- *With respect to the Educational Activities* – a plan for using the pool report archive as a springboard for educational programs focused on the role of journalists and their work in covering the President. Proposals could include programs or events in Washington DC to complement annual WHCA dinner and/or events at the University’s campus that would bring together WHCA members and the University’s wider community.
- *With respect to Governance* - a plan for an Advisory Board whose function will be to establish, monitor and provide oversight to the Pool Reports Digital Archive Project. We anticipate that this Advisory Board would be comprised of five persons, at least two of which would be representatives of the WHCA.
- A proposed annual budget to adequately support the educational activities proposed.

## ***FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS***

In preparing budgets as outlined above, the WHCA requests as comprehensive and detailed proposal as the information provided allows, recognizing that a final budgetary proposal will ultimately be developed and agreed upon following further consultation with a selected partner.

The WHCA is prepared to make a modest financial contribution to the overall project, but the budget proposed should reflect the full amount of the costs associated with the implementation of the project as described. The WHCA contribution reflects our desire to develop a long-term relationship with a partner that shares our commitment to making this project a valuable contribution to journalists, the academic community, and the public at large.

If it is anticipated that the budget will require a potential partner to solicit funds from third parties, either through foundation fundraising or private contributions, then the proposal should outline how such activities would be undertaken and describe potential or likely sources of such funds.

## ***TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION***

Outlined below are a set of milestones for the development and implementation of the project:

August 1, 2016 – Acknowledge receipt of the RFP and indication of intention to make a proposal.

*We expect during this time period to collaborate with potential partners to jointly refine the scope of this RFP.*

October 31, 2016 – Deadline for receipt of RFP submissions

November/December 2016 – WHCA review of RFPs. Consultations and modifications as necessary.

January 31, 2017 – Final RFPs submitted.

February/March 2017 – WHCA Board review and approval including budgetary commitment.

April 2017 – Announcement of Partnership in conjunction with WHCA dinner

TBD 2018 Launch of Presidential Pool Report Archive in partnership with WHCA

## ***INQUIRIES AND REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION***

We invite all parties interested in pursuing this Request for a Proposal to submit any questions or comments to the WHCA so that we can engage in a collaborative effort with a potential partner in advancing this project. Inquiries and requests for information should be directed to:

Ms. Julia Whiston  
Executive Director

White House Correspondents' Association  
[whca@starpower.net](mailto:whca@starpower.net)

or

White House Correspondents' Association  
600 New Hampshire Avenue, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-266-7453 (phone)