

## APPALACHIA REPORTING PROJECT Call for Pitches

*Rewire* is a daily online publication producing evidence-based reporting on reproductive and sexual health, rights, and justice. As part of a special project to develop original on-the-ground reporting in Appalachia, we are seeking pitches from reporters on the structural and political challenges that undermine health, justice, and economic well-being in relevant communities. Priority will be given to coverage of Central Appalachia (including Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), but pitches covering other sub-regions of Appalachia are welcome. Pitches from writers living/working in Appalachia, or with experience in the region, will be given priority.

Appalachia is designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other U.S. health bodies as a medically underserved region, lacking in primary health-care providers and other forms of care. Major factors contributing to lack of access to care include low incomes, geographic isolation, low rates of educational attainment, high rates of domestic violence, and lack of economic investment.

Rates of maternal mortality and morbidity in the region are higher than average in the United States. Health experts also characterize the region as having high infant mortality and poor child health, among other poor health outcomes.

Rural populations have great, unmet needs for access to contraception and abortion. Stigma and lack of providers, among other factors, underlie the hardships of the region and have persisted for years. There also is high demand for a wide range of other and sometimes related health conditions. Further, there is relatively little focus on this area in the press and policy debates.

We are seeking pitches about Appalachia—ranging from short reported pieces to longer analyses to in-depth investigative reporting—that include but are not limited to the following areas:

- 1) Access to reproductive and sexual health care and the determinants that affect access for vulnerable groups—in particular women and girls—including attitudes, politics, and needs;
- 2) Trends in maternal, infant, and child health care, domestic violence, reproductive cancers, and the intersections of drug and opioid use and reproductive health, as well as the structural barriers that prevent, or contemporary strategies being employed to find, solutions to these problems;
- 3) The current and potential effects of national and state policy and budget debates—such as changes in the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and other relevant investments—on the region, and how these do or do not reflect people’s needs and aspirations in their lives and communities;
- 4) The drivers of economic growth or poverty affecting access to jobs, health care, and social services, and the state and federal policies, budgets, politics, and agencies affecting these trends;
- 5) An examination of the roles played in unmet needs by stigma and discrimination; information and misinformation; religion, religious institutions, and religiously affiliated hospitals on reproductive and sexual justice in the region.

We will disseminate this work widely to our readers, the public, other media, and politicians in the interest of informing debate and policies. We also intend to build strong relationships with regional outlets to ensure reporting from the region is accessible within the region.

The process:

Our editors will select pitches on a case-by-case basis. We also seek to develop longer-term relationships with those freelancers who prove able to provide consistently timely, high-quality reporting in any category.

Pitches should include:

- Clear and succinct outlines of the work proposed, including a strong thesis statement and supporting background information with links to relevant events, research, or articles; the importance of the piece to the issue at hand; and the timeliness of the piece proposed, including how it addresses in a compelling way a specific trend or trends, a set of findings, event, or political issue.
- First-timers to *Rewire* should include in their pitch links to or samples of other work.
- Investigative pitches should include a budget clearly spelling out costs and rates for the work to be done, as well as deadlines.

Please note: We discourage unsolicited complete articles, and are unable to pay for such pieces, as it is most efficient for us to shape the direction of content starting from the idea phase.

All pitches should be sent to [appalachia@rewire.news](mailto:appalachia@rewire.news)

Rates are as follows:

- Shorter reported pieces will be paid at a rate of \$250 to \$350 depending on the scope of work and on experience. Analyses that include substantial original reporting will be paid at rates of \$350 and above, though these are negotiable in some cases.
- Approved travel and other costs will be reimbursed. Pitches for longer-term, in-depth investigative pieces should include a detailed budget outlining writer's fees and travel and research costs as well as timelines for the work involved.