# ProPublica / ProPublica Summer Data Institute

## Your submission (ID #2x0SHgttunp4)

https://propublica.forms.fm/propublica-summer-data-institute/responses/2x0SHgttunp4

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Will you be able to attend the entire Summer Data Institute from June 1st to June 15th?

✓ Yes

No

How did you hear about the Summer Data Institute?

✓ Social media (ex: Twitter, Facebook)

ProPublica's website

✓ A friend or colleague

✓ An email list or professional group

Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic heritage? Select as many as apply.

Non-Hispanic White

Black or African American

✓ Latino or Hispanic

East Asian or Asian American

South Asian or Indian American

Middle Eastern or Arab American

Native American or Alaskan Native

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

I do not wish to answer this question

What is your gender identity?

Male


Why are you applying to the ProPublica Summer Data Institute?

Earlier this month, I sat in a room in Denver and listened the industry's finest data journalists talk about using multiple regression analysis, Python and other tools to unleash meaningful stories for both local and national readers. The Computer-Assisted Reporting Conference reinvigorated my passion for reporting and made me proud of the journalism being performed in newsrooms across the country. But it also forced me to realize that I am not fully serving my community in Northern Colorado. Stories go untold because I lack the skills to find and present newsworthy information hidden in data. The ProPublica Summer Data Institute offers knowledge my newsroom lacks, keys for unlocking data stories and ways to better inform readers in Colorado.

ProPublica's knowledge of data mining, analysis and visualization cannot be learned from those with whom I work. The Fort Collins Coloradoan, like many mid-size newspapers, does not have a senior data reporter, web programmer or digital designer. But we do have a willingness to try new things and top-level support for finding new ways to produce relevant journalism. Instead of worrying about the paper's daily demands and leaving the newsroom short staffed room, my executive editor offered to provide anything I need to attend the institute. If I am selected to attend, I will be able to share what I learn in New York through both teaching and collaboration. In this way, the institute would a great opportunity not just for me but for my entire newsroom.

It would be an honor to work alongside ProPublica staff and learn how the nation's top investigative nonprofit tackles stories that matter. The institute's project-centered approach will allow me to apply what I learn in my own reporting. I have already found public data I can explore on whether Fort Collins is neglecting infrastructure needs in Hispanic neighborhoods and what areas of the city are adding residents the fastest. I need to go to the institute to explore these topics and many more issues my community faces.

The institute will not teach me everything about data journalism, but the training would be a significant step forward in my progression as a data journalist. My current digital toolbox is primarily limited to text, Google Fusion Tables, Infogram graphics and Caspio databases. The institute would expand my online skill set and improve how I highlight trends and relationships for readers. The workshop will also be a valuable follow up to my introduction to higher-level data journalism earlier this month.

NICAR was important in showing me both where I am as a data journalist today and where I need to be to better serve my readers. The ProPublica Summer Data Institute would help me to start bridging my knowledge gap. Both my dedication to journalism and ability to face challenges will be put to good use if I am fortunate enough to be selected for the institute. What I learn would be launching pad for me to develop expertise in data analysis, coding and programming and design.


Are you currently a journalism student or already working in journalism? Tell us what you're up to now.

My time as a professional journalist has been short. But in the 22 months since graduating from the University of Colorado Boulder, I reapplied for my job, worked three different beats and doubled down on creating a future in journalism. No other industry would bring me nearly as much satisfaction. Luckily for me, I am among the first in my family able to transition from punching a time clock to pursuing a passion. I love being the on the front line of this golden age of digital journalism, figuring out how to sustainably merge traditional news values

with new storytelling techniques. The ProPublica Summer Data Institute would give me a crash course in using computer-assisted reporting to produce journalism that matters.

A crash course in higher-level data journalism is needed. I have taught myself how to use readily-available tools like Caspio databases, Google Fusion Tables, Infogram and Tableau. I have also attended workshops to advance my Excel skills. Now, I am ready to advance to the next level of data analysis and visualization. The ProPublica Summer Data is the opportunity I need to further myself as a data journalist.

I was not handed my data reporting spot. After graduating in May 2014, The Coloradoan hired me to cover small town, southeast of Fort Collins, Colorado. I set a high bar for myself and produced stories that resonated with both the local community and a larger audience. A short time later, the Coloradoan expanded my beat to include a neighboring county. The move was bittersweet because my application to fill the paper's data position was shot down due to my lack of experience. I used my time as the "Windsor and Weld County" reporter to advance my reporting abilities and the scope of the projects I covered. For example, I used state records to highlight spills produced by the oil and gas industry. In spring 2015, my editors rewarded my efforts by promoting me to the data beat. I have shown my appreciation by challenging myself to learn news skills and continually tell better stories.

I am committed to telling important stories. Just months after being hired, the entire Coloradoan newsroom staff was asked to reapply for its jobs. It was a sobering experience for me as a reporter fresh out of school. Facing the possibility of losing my job forced me to analyze just how passionate I am about being a byline behind the news. In the end, I am prepared to face the journalism industry's struggles if it means being able to inform others and do the work I love.

The ProPublica Summer Data Institute would allow me to learn the skills I need to grow as a journalist. I am not sure where my career in the industry will take me, but I know what I learn will be used every step of the way. I am ready to be challenged by the instructors, hit the ground running and apply what I learn from the institute.

Have you worked on any projects (professional or personal) related to data, design or code? If so, tell us about them and include links!

In 2015, a woman used her phone to search "how people got caught after bank robberies" before stealing $597 from Western States Bank in Fort Collins, Colorado. Area law enforcement shared the woman's search history in a news release shortly after they arrested her just north of the state line. I immediately wondered how often police search cell phones in my area. Fortunately, data journalists can do more than wonder.

Three months after the bank robbery, I wrote an article (noconow.co/1CeX1Vo) detailing that county law enforcement searched 217 phones in 2014, up 75 percent from the 124 devices searched in 2010. My ability to do straight-forward data stories like this grows every month. I feel confident in my abilities to request local public data and point out obvious trends to readers. Just this month, I pointed out that Fort Collins, Colorado is the 12th fastest growing metro in the United States in 2015.

The article (noconow.co/1RsXEFu) about residential growth in Fort Collins represents my growth as a data journalist. On its face, I admit the story is not extraordinary. The data is easy to work with, and I have certainly

done greater work in the growth space including a roundup up of how the region is preparing to add 1 million residents by 2040 (noconow.co/1VWNTkO) and a look at where new residents are coming from (noconow.co/1UGAa2H). Newsrooms across the country can obtain new U.S. Census Bureau data, see how their metros rank nationally and write straightforward articles. That is exactly the approach I took last year with the metropolitan population estimates (noconow.co/1RPeUUc). But this time around, I had more skills and could use data visualization to tell the story about growth in metros across the country. I paired shapefiles with Google Fusion Tables to visualize Fort Collins' growth. Finding new ways to show readers trends and data is one of my main goals as a reporter.

The ProPublica Summer Data Institute would teach me a treasure trove of new ways to engage readers. The information being taught on data analysis, coding and programming and design could have added several layers of sophistication to the data stories I shared with readers in the past. More importantly, the institute can help me engage the community going forward and address topics that matter to vulnerable populations. One project I would like to tackle would look at whether infrastructure needs in Fort Collins Hispanic neighborhoods lags behind other areas in the community. Other data I am working to obtain includes the number of times Colorado over issued food stamp dollars due to human errors or computer shortcomings at the Colorado Department of Human Services. I hope I will have the institute's knowledge as I take on these and other stories that impact readers' lives.

If your project isn't published online, feel free to upload a file to show us your work.
No response

If you have a personal website or portfolio, we'd love to see it.
http://www.adriandgarcia.com

What dietary restrictions should we know about?
I am a pescetarian, which is just a fancy way of saying a vegetarian who eats fish.

Please upload your resume

RESUME_2016.pdf76 KB

Include a link to your resume if you have one

http://adriandgarcia.com/resume/

Please explain how the stipend would make it possible for you to attend the Summer Data Institute.

No response

Tell us the stipend amount you'd need.

No response