

**Nebraska Press Association and A-Mark Foundation
announce the A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism in Nebraska
with cash awards totaling \$15,000**

Investigative reporters are skilled at developing sources, following leads and checking facts, but pursuing these stories requires significant time and resources. To support this vital work, the Nebraska Press Association and the A-Mark Foundation have partnered to establish a new award with a total of \$15,000 in cash prizes for Nebraska reporters and their newsrooms.

The A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism is open to all Nebraska journalists whose primary medium is the written word. The awards will be:

First place: \$5,000 for the journalist(s) and \$2,500 to the news organization

Second place: \$3,000 for the journalist(s) and \$1,500 to the news organization

Third place: \$2,000 for the journalist(s) and \$1,000 to the news organization

Eligibility

1. Entries must focus on a single investigative topic, presented in one story or a series of related stories.
2. Open to Nebraska-based journalists and news organizations whose primary medium is the written word.
3. Freelance journalists are eligible if entry is published in Nebraska-based outlets.
4. Entries in print or combination of media is allowed (print, digital, audio, video, multimedia); however, the primary medium shall be the written word.
5. Entries must have been published between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.
6. Only one entry per journalist or team of journalists. Individual journalists on a team entry may also submit an individual separate-subject entry.
7. Maximum of five supporting pieces may be submitted per entry (i.e. photos, graphics)

Submission Requirements

1. Include a 300- to 500-word letter explaining:
 - Background and scope of the entry.
 - Actual or potential impact of the reporting.
2. Upload entries, supporting pieces and letter to
<https://forms.gle/KB64Ch9sKYAPB76B9>.

Evaluation Criteria

Judging will be done by an independent, out-of-state panel of journalists, based on the following core elements:

1. Original Reporting

- Uncovers new information that is not widely known and often actively hidden.
- Demonstrates initiative, effort and enterprise.
- Provides insights into issues of public importance.

2. Research Depth and Documentation

- Thorough research using public records, databases and multiple sources.
- Evidence of overcoming significant obstacles.

3. Quality of Journalism

- Accuracy, fairness, accountability and adherence to strong journalistic principles.

4. Storytelling and Presentation

- Clear, compelling and well-structured storytelling.
- Effective use of visuals, data and multimedia to enhance understanding.

5. Community Impact

- Demonstrated or potential impact, such as sparking dialogue, raising awareness of critical issues, or influencing policy or positive change.

ELIGIBILITY: This contest is open to all news media organizations based in Nebraska whose primary medium is the written word, to include their staff members and independent journalists who produce the investigative reporting content. Entries must have been published between January 1, 2025 and January 31, 2025.

NPA MEMBERS: The first, second and third place winners in Category 35 – In-Depth Writing of the NPA 2026 Better Newspaper Contest (all divisions) will be automatically entered into this A-Mark Prize contest at no additional fee.

NON-NPA MEMBERS: \$20 fee per entry.

DEADLINE FOR ALL ENTRIES: 5 p.m. Monday, February 23rd, 2026

WINNERS: Winners will be announced and cash awards presented at the Nebraska Press Association Better Newspaper Contest Awards Presentation on April 17, 2025, in Lincoln NE.

The A-Mark Foundation (amarkfoundation.org) is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in 1997. Its stated mission: We believe that a healthy and free media is the foundation of democracy. Our mission statement reflects this core belief: Making focused grants to organizations that offer awards to promote and encourage journalism and investigative reporting.

The Nebraska Press Association was founded in 1873 and its stated mission is to protect freedom of the press and to support Nebraska's community newspapers.