

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## FOR JOURNALISTS TO INVESTIGATE THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

*An initiative to enable coverage and awareness of a crucial issue, in partnership with the [New South Institute \(NSI\)](#).*

The new Public Service Amendment Act, signed into law in March 2026, addresses a critical flaw in our state administration. During the democratic transition the line between elected leaders and public servants was blurred, for various historical reasons. The new Act draws a clear distinction between those who decide what the government must do and those who are entrusted to decide how to carry it out and who must do it.

As the NSI put it: "The new Act begins to correct that design flaw ... it does not solve everything. Merit still has to be protected in practice. Institutions still have to be rebuilt. The Act still has to be brought into operation and then defended in implementation. But something vital has changed: South Africa now has a firmer legal basis for a professional public service."

This raises many critical issues. Does the Act address the causes and effects of state capture? Will it help in repairing the damage. Will it establish a solid, stable, professional public service? What impact will it have on the workings of our state? And on the lives of public servants? And the public?

HNF and NSI are offering grants to journalists to investigate and do in-depth reporting on issues, problems and solutions in South Africa's public service with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding.

**Grants of R30 000 are available for up to two journalists.** Any journalist or team of journalists and/or data specialists may apply, and the work may be done and published/broadcast in any medium.

HNF favours work which is in the public interest, aims to reveal new information, is in-depth and investigative in approach and uses innovative techniques or tools. Grant decisions are made by an independent panel of experts and are treated confidentially.

HNF will provide editing and publication support.

Applicants should submit a short proposal (not more than two pages), a CV, a budget ([see guidelines here](#)) and where possible an expression of interest from a publisher. The proposal should make it clear what you intend to show in the work, how you intend to do it and how you will ensure it has impact.

**Applications should be submitted [here](#).** Closing date: June 15, 2026.