

2017  
ANNUAL REPORT

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# BUILDING LOCAL POWER

My recommendations for podcasts on human-centered economic solutions incl. @teamhumanshow @Commons\_place & @ilsr: <http://shareable.net/Z4P>

— @maira  
Mai Sutton, Shareable



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It can be difficult to grasp the scope of Amazon's dominance. Terrific new @stacyfmitchell & @ilsr maps it out. <https://ilsr.org/amazon-stranglehold/>

— @linamkhan  
Lina Khan, Director of Legal Policy at Open Markets Institute

This says it all! From @ilsr - how #compost will create soil & jobs... and basically save the world. #organics16 #ontag

— @MelLuymes  
Mel Luymes, Headlands Agri-Enviro-Solutions



Even more relevant today than it was last November -R via @ilsr <https://ilsr.org/amazon-stranglehold/>

— @RalphNader  
Ralph Nader



Left: Christopher Mitchell speaks to Broadband Communities Conference in Atlanta; Stacy Mitchell interviewed on CNBC's Power Lunch; Brenda Platt and Virginia Streeter attend bill signing with Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan; and Linda Bilsens is featured in the Washington Post, composting at the Howard University Community Composting Cooperative, where ILSR provided training and technical assistance.

Cover: Christopher Mitchell speaks at a Politico Live event on the "Future of Wireless."; Brenda Platt speaking to a national audience at a US Composting Council meeting; the Westmill Solar Co-operative is one of the largest in the world (photo credit: MrRenewables, Ben Cavanna); an old public library is still relevant, needed and going strong; and composting at Real Food Farm in Baltimore, where ILSR provided training and the compost system.

# BUILDING LOCAL POWER

ILSR's podcast highlighting efforts to secure a community-scaled economy

ARCHIVE AND SUBSCRIBE HERE: [ILSR.ORG/BUILDING-LOCAL-POWER](http://ILSR.ORG/BUILDING-LOCAL-POWER)



ILSR's Christopher Mitchell interviews former ILSR staff member, Justin Dahlheimer, who is now President of the First National Bank of Osakis.

**"We are going to win. We are going to break up Google, Facebook, and Amazon... At this moment of despair, when people see these awesome concentrations of power, the most important step we have taken it, and that is to recognize the problem."**

— Barry Lynn, Executive Director at Open Markets Institute (BLP Episode 30)

## iTUNES REVIEWS:

*"It's wonderful to finally listen to people sit down and have an in-depth conversation on difficult topics."*

*"Non-partisan, issues-based, pro-local. Just what we need these days."*

*"If you want to hear about how local communities are doing things to strengthen their economies and bringing more local control to decision making, this is the podcast for you."*

*"This show analyzes economics and politics from an authentic grass roots perspective."*

*"An extremely knowledgeable host and the guests are interesting...filling a need that had gone unfulfilled for far too long."*

## THIS YEAR'S GUESTS:

- Greg LeRoy • Andrew Gillum • Gary Reback • Sophia Hosain • Guy Schaffer
- Katrina Scotto di Carlo • Justin Dahlheimer • Debbie Dooley • Niaz Dorry
- Gina Schaefer • Barry Lynn • Joe Maxwell • John Ikerd • AnMarie Rodgers

# Letter from the Co-Directors

In the wake of what we described in last year's report as "a deeply troubling and divisive presidential campaign" and the abdication by the federal government of its role in protecting the public welfare, building and exercising local power is more important than ever. For more than four decades ILSR has argued that communities can play a key role in determining our environmental, social, and economic future.

This year our newest podcast, *Building Local Power*, has really hit its stride. We hope that it can rapidly gain recognition as an important source of insight on scale and ownership in both the public and private sectors, and how communities can counter the prevailing trend of economic consolidation.

Cities are stepping up to the plate. Ammon, Idaho, has laid the foundation for economic and social innovations by building a city-wide, community-owned high-speed fiber network. In Burlington, Vt., community land trusts now account for more than 15 percent of the city's residential housing. Lancaster, Calif., is moving rapidly toward a decentralized energy system that relies on 100 percent renewables. Washtenaw County, Mich., passed a 10 cent fee on disposable shopping bags. San Francisco has imposed a tax on luxury apartments to fund free city college for residents, and altered its zoning to favor neighborhood-serving businesses over chains. A dozen cities are protecting the dignity of their workers by raising the minimum wage and requiring paid sick days.

Yet, even as communities try to defend and nurture their citizens, they are having to defend themselves against states that are stripping cities of their authority to do so and a federal government intent on financially punishing cities that refuse to do its bidding. These are dark days, but the vigorous response by communities across the country is inspiring and heartening, and offers beacons of light and hope. ILSR continues to work with an ever-widening network of local and state governments, businesses, community organizations, and activists who are utilizing our experience, resources, and insights to make positive impacts across the nation.

There is still much we need to do. We look forward to meeting these challenges by building local power to create a just, safe, and cleaner world for the future.

Sincerely,

Stacy Mitchell & Brenda Platt  
Co-Directors

# Mapping Our Work

ILSR provided technical assistance to policymakers and grassroots groups in hundreds of communities around the country. Shown below and listed here are just a sample of those collaborations.

## KEY

-  COMMUNITY BROADBAND NETWORKS
-  COMMUNITY SCALED ECONOMY
-  COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY
-  ENERGY DEMOCRACY
-  WASTE TO WEALTH

## COMMUNITY BROADBAND NETWORKS:

- 1 | **MARIETTA, OHIO** – ILSR’s Christopher Mitchell keynoted a locally organized conference about broadband in the Appalachians as part of a larger effort to surface policies to upgrade that region’s Internet access.
- 2 | **AMMON, IDAHO** – This city officially launched its municipal fiber network after years of preparation and work, including multiple requests for our advice and assistance.
- 3 | **NEWPORT, TENN.** – We spoke to the City Council and the Utility Board after anti-government groups tried to derail their efforts to build a municipal fiber network.

## COMMUNITY SCALED ECONOMY:

- 1 | **HAMILTON, MONT.** – After hearing ILSR’s Stacy Mitchell speak, community members started a campaign to persuade the county to purchase less from Amazon and more locally.
- 2 | **PORTLAND, MAINE** – ILSR’s *Affordable Space* report helped spark an event that brought business owners, public officials, and citizens together to talk about how to keep the city’s local businesses strong.
- 3 | **NASHVILLE, TENN.** – At the invitation of a growing independent business alliance, we presented community leaders with policy ideas for fostering a more equitable and locally rooted economy.
- 4 | **MEADVILLE, PA.** – Inspired by a series of presentations we gave, a group of citizens has launched an investment cooperative to fund equitable development.

## COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY:

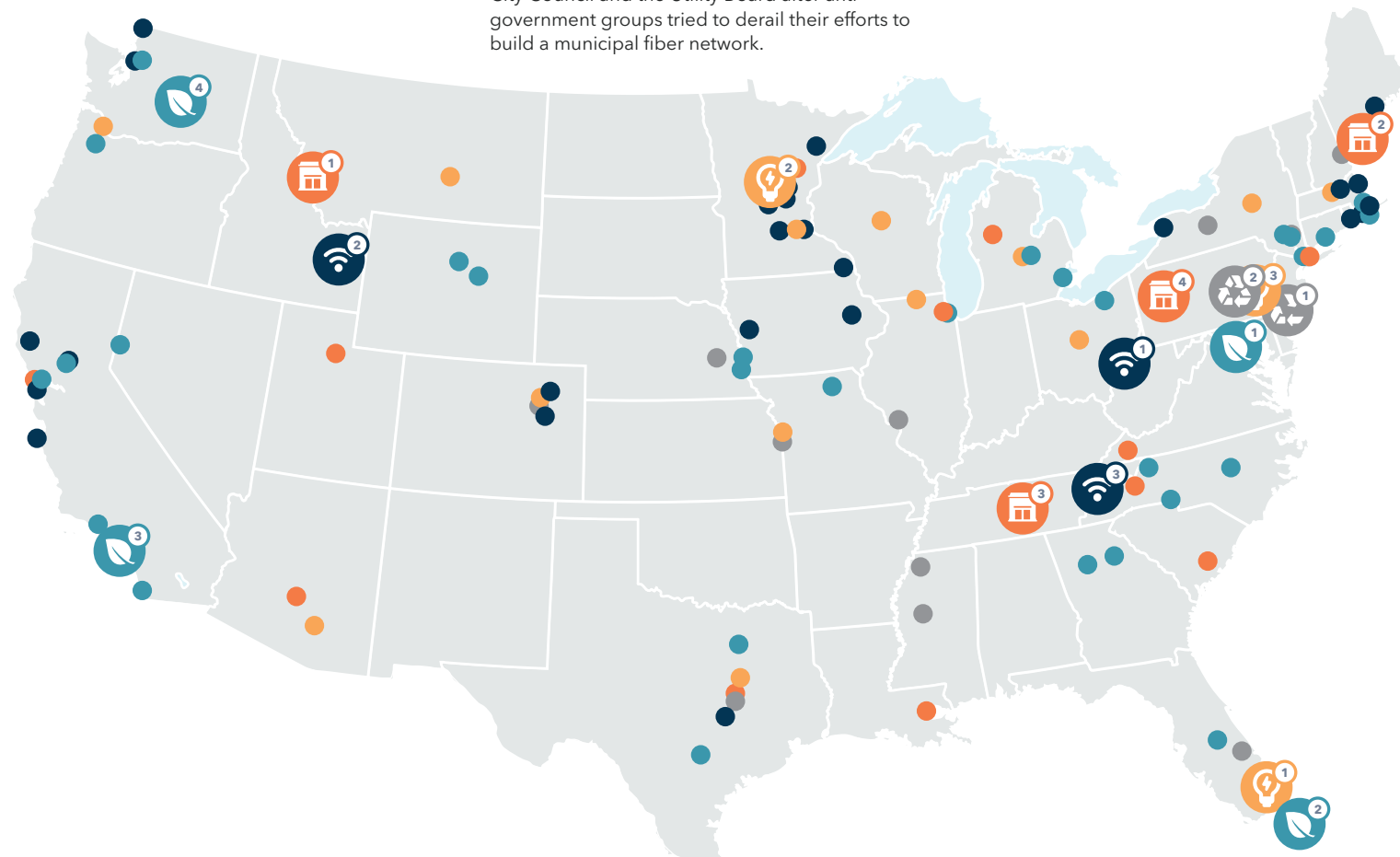
- 1 | **D.C. & MARYLAND** – We passed two statewide compost bills in Maryland, established five community compost sites, provided training, and sponsored several food recovery summits.
- 2 | **U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS** – In the wake of Hurricane Maria, we helped write an RFP for composting and mulching of wood and yard debris (instead of burning this material) and identified service providers.
- 3 | **LOS ANGELES, CALIF.** – We convened the 4th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum with 60+ community composters from 17 states. The event has catalyzed a national network and movement.
- 4 | **WASHINGTON** – ILSR’s Brenda Platt keynoted the Washington Organics Recycling Council conference and provided assistance in replicating a statewide bioplastics labeling law.

## ENERGY DEMOCRACY:

- 1 | **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLA.** – We helped advocates launch a campaign to leverage utility franchise fee discussions to influence their utility and play a stronger role in shaping their energy future.
- 2 | **MINNESOTA** – We are leading a coalition to reform the state’s implementation of a law to support deployment of local renewable energy to stoke rural economic development.
- 3 | **PHILADELPHIA, PA.** – We are advising local advocates in their campaign to ensure 30% of the city’s energy is sourced from locally generated solar, with a long-range goal of influencing the city’s forthcoming *Energy Master Plan*.

## WASTE TO WEALTH:

- 1 | **BALTIMORE, MD.** – *Why Should Baltimore Recycle More?* presented to the City a clear multiphased plan to double its recycling rate, save millions of dollars, and create over 500 jobs in two years.
- 2 | **PHILADELPHIA, PA.** – ILSR’s Linda Knapp chairs the Food Policy Council’s Zero Waste Subcommittee, which recommended the City adopt a Zero Waste Policy. This year the City released its *Zero Waste & Litter Control Action Plan*.





## INITIATIVE

# COMMUNITY BROADBAND NETWORKS

[www.ilsr.org/initiatives/broadband](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/broadband)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** ILSR's Community Broadband Networks Initiative had a busy and productive year. Our research, creative mapping, communications, storytelling, and organizing support moved many communities forward and spurred some rural cooperatives to make strides delivering high-quality Internet access to their member owners. We provided technical assistance in 25+ communities and gave 20+ presentations around the country to make the case for broadband networks that work for all of us.

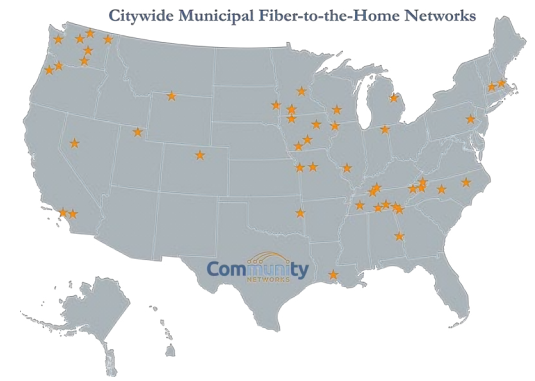
One of the most significant attacks we had to overcome this year came from a deeply flawed academic study from the University of Pennsylvania Law School that falsely claimed that many high profile municipal networks were bad investments. We found substantial errors in the analysis, corrected them publicly, and then made sure the author's retraction was shared with the media. This study is still cited by those defending big cable and telephone companies, and it is one example of why our persistent work to provide accurate information is so important.

### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We published a key report about North Carolina and options to expand rural broadband access. That state has a stark divide between rural and urban investment - and it's well-positioned for cooperatives and municipal networks to make a big difference.
- We stepped up our work in Appalachia. We issued press releases to over 500 media contacts in every county of Kentucky, southeast Ohio, and western West Virginia, with

◀ *Christopher Mitchell speaks at a Politico Live event on the "Future of Wireless."*

information on our new detailed maps of regional broadband access and the amount the federal government is giving big telephone companies to provide services too slow to be called broadband. We built customized toolkits for policymakers, activists, and organizations in these regions, with each kit outlining local actions to improve access.



▲ *ILSR's original research led to the first-ever national map of municipal citywide fiber-to-the-home networks.*

- Given the philosophy of those in charge at the federal level, we unleashed a new infographic called, "The Market has Spoken. The Market is Broken," which illuminates their misguided approach.
- Our publishing schedule on MuniNetworks.org was fierce. We were cited in 200+ media stories, released 6 new fact sheets, 50 podcasts, and several videos. We improved our creative online resources, including our backgrounder, which links to all of the citywide municipal fiber networks across the country, and our interactive map of 500+ community networks.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** We will continue to see powerful incumbent cable and telephone companies try to limit local options, but each year we get closer to repealing those restrictions and solidifying the rights of communities to establish their own networks. Through our policy leadership in the Next Century Cities network, we are increasing direct engagement with city leaders and providing important strategic support to grow new programs. We will continue to expand our focus on disadvantaged communities, especially in rural areas, to ensure that households have robust Internet access.

We are also creating the organizational partnerships needed to produce an in-depth analysis and report on local solutions for creating and expanding Internet access networks on tribal reservations.

**IMPACT STORY:** At the request of a local group in Newport, Tenn., we issued a report explaining how claims by an anti-government organization were incorrect and intentionally biased. Initiative Director Christopher Mitchell traveled to the community to speak with the utility board and city council members, who later voted unanimously to move forward with their citywide broadband project. Over the course of the year we responded to many similar requests for assistance; these often drive the direction of our work and new resources.



## INITIATIVE

# COMMUNITY-SCALED ECONOMY

[www.ilsr.org/initiatives/independent-business](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/independent-business)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** In 2017, we met with public officials, armed activists with data and analysis, published articles in high-profile publications, and embarked on new research. Through these efforts and through the hundreds of news stories that cited our work, ILSR’s Community-Scaled Economy Initiative reached a wider audience this year with our core messages: our democracy is healthiest when economic power is widely dispersed; locally owned businesses are competitive and vital, but misguided public policy and concentrated corporate power work against them; and advancing an agenda to restore the vitality of places now being left behind is urgently needed.

### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We published an influential article in *The Atlantic*, “The Rise and Fall of the Word ‘Monopoly’ in American Life,” and our report, *Monopoly Power and the Decline of Small Business*, attracted a surge of new readers when it received an award this year for antitrust scholarship.
- We partnered with Local Progress, a national network of local elected officials, to produce and distribute a brief for city leaders that highlights policies cities can adopt to support the creation and growth of local businesses.
- With the release of our report, *Amazon’s Stranglehold*, ILSR has played a pivotal role in informing the growing discussion about Amazon’s power. The report has attracted over 40,000 readers, and has been cited in more than 300 media stories. We’ve collaborated with diverse stakeholders to address the company’s impact, including

- ◀ At an event for community leaders in Nashville, Stacy Mitchell presented policy strategies for cultivating a more equitable and locally rooted economy.

by convening a day-long strategy meeting with leaders from labor, small business, and research groups.

- We spoke at several events. In Vancouver, B.C., and Portland, Maine, research associate Olivia LaVecchia presented our work on policy strategies that cities are using to create a built environment where local businesses can succeed. In Minneapolis, initiative director Stacy Mitchell discussed Amazon with *MSNBC* anchor Chris Hayes before a live audience. Our work was also featured at events in Kansas City, Nashville, and elsewhere.
- We responded to nearly 100 requests for technical assistance from urban and rural communities around the country and also produced a slate of op-eds, newsletters, podcasts, and short articles.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** In the year ahead, we will release an explainer that breaks down how America’s monopoly problem impacts everyday lives and communities and outlines actions that people can take. We will continue to activate small business leaders by coordinating the Advocates for Independent Business coalition and developing a detailed local, state, and federal policy plan for reversing economic concentration and rebuilding local businesses. We’ll also be speaking and organizing conference sessions on these ideas, including moderating a panel of city leaders at the National League of Cities’ annual conference.

**IMPACT STORY:** When Amazon acquired Whole Foods in June, anti-monopoly policy and Amazon’s growing reach became front-page news. Journalists, citizens, and public officials turned to ILSR for help understanding these issues. We were invited to meet with several Congressional offices, including Democrats and Republicans, and our work was featured in over 100 news stories about the merger. It was also cited by U.S. Representative David Cicilline, ranking member of the House subcommittee on antitrust, in his public letter calling for regulatory scrutiny of Amazon’s market power. Although the deal was ultimately approved, the backlash it sparked has fueled a growing anti-monopoly movement.

ILSR’s “thoroughly researched, compellingly written report presents a detailed view of the growing power of Amazon and the ways it threatens local businesses, workers, and local economies. It’s a must-read.”

— Tim O’Reilly, founder of O’Reilly Media and expert on technology policy

“What you and ILSR do is vital to the survival of local communities and their economies.”

— Shawn Wathen, Chapter One Bookstore in Hamilton, Mont.



## INITIATIVE

# COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY

[www.ilsr.org/initiatives/composting](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/composting)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** With a goal to create jobs, enhance soils, protect the climate, and reduce waste, ILSR's Composting for Community Initiative is providing alternatives to polluting landfills and incinerators. Our program promotes distributed options, such as home and community composting, along with larger facilities. This year, we expanded the reach of our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders (NSR) Composter Training Program; launched new community composting sites as replicable models; passed legislation, which others are already adapting; convened national networks for community composters; released new outreach materials to elevate the importance of composting; and documented the growth in municipal food recovery programs to facilitate further adoption.

### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We convened the 4th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum. More than 60 community composters from 17 states gathered in Los Angeles. The event has catalyzed a national network and movement.
- Our NSR master composter program has trained 120+ people who are engaging their neighbors in composting at dozens of urban farms and community gardens in D.C., Atlanta, and Baltimore.
- In Baltimore, we spurred the creation of a community composting cooperative at Real Food Farm, which has 70 members and is diverting about 150 lbs. of food scraps per week. With the Chesapeake Center for Youth Development, we also launched a youth-led food scrap collection and composting operation.

- ◀ *Attendees of the 4th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum in Los Angeles convened by BioCycle and ILSR.*
- At East Capitol Urban Farm in D.C., we built a composting system, trained student interns, and established a community composting collaborative.
- We passed two statewide bills in Maryland: one requiring compostable plastics labeling and the other, new compost infrastructure.
- We released a series of popular posters on the benefits of compost to soils, water, climate, and jobs. Our "Hierarchy to Reduce Food Waste and Grow Community" is the first to highlight distributed composting.
- We profiled 17 bike-powered food scrap recovery entrepreneurs, sharing their lessons learned.
- We updated *BioCycle's* nationwide survey of cities offering residential food waste recovery. Since the last survey in 2014, the number of municipal curbside programs has grown 60 percent and households served has reached 5.1 million.

"Wanted to extend a personal thank you (!!!!!) for helping bring newbies like me into community composting. I arrived back in Denver last night, and today, confident I now have everything I need to make my compost hauling business a reality, I gave notice at my day job. Thrilled to be joining this admirable community of dedicated people and move the needle on composting (on bikes!) here in Denver."

— Christi Turner, *SCRAPS*

**LOOKING AHEAD:** This is a pivotal moment for the future of composting. With supportive resources and policies, composting, and community composting in particular, is poised to grow exponentially. We plan to offer legal resources with the Sustainable Economies Law Center, and to release new guides: *Avoid the Curb: Guide to Home Composting Programs*, *Best Management Practices in Community Composting*, and an expanded toolkit for our NSR Composter Training Program. On the ground in D.C., we will support existing composting sites and launch new ones. For instance, with Soilful City, a nonprofit that uses agriculture as a way to heal and organize stressed communities, we will start composting at the Clay Terrace community garden, where we have started training returning citizens (from incarceration) on how to compost.

**IMPACT STORY:** Two graduates of our NSR composter training program, Lacey Walker and Phil Wescott, took their knowledge back to Frederick County, Md., organized a Composting Workgroup and held a Compost Summit bringing together legislators, farmers, and citizens to identify existing challenges, such as zoning and unclear regulations. With Lacey and Phil's advocacy and ILSR's support, the county has now identified organics collection and decentralized community-scale composting as two of three priority waste management options. Phil quit his day job and started Key City Compost, becoming the first service provider in the county to offer curbside collection of food scraps for composting.



◀ John Farrell records an episode of his podcast, *Local Energy Rules*, from our Minneapolis office.

## INITIATIVE

# ENERGY DEMOCRACY

📌 [www.ilsr.org/initiatives/energy](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/energy)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** Significant changes and rollbacks at the federal level cast state and local action on clean energy into sharp relief this year. Our concept of Energy Democracy – allowing consumers and communities to individually and collectively choose the energy futures that make sense for them – has never been more important. The technology that supports local distributed energy resources, from rooftop solar panels to batteries to electric vehicles, is rapidly becoming better and cheaper. We spent the year advocating for city and state policies that help individuals and communities access energy cost savings, develop renewable energy, and boost their local economies. We continue to challenge the monopoly ownership structure of most electric utilities to ensure customers can capture clean energy at a good price, and to empower individuals, business owners, and local leaders to keep up that fight.

### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- John Farrell and Karlee Weinmann shared the vision of energy democracy in many places in 2017, including a keynote at the AERO Expo in Montana, a talk in front of the Community Renewable Energy Association in Oregon, and a keynote at the first-ever Midwest Energy Fair in Minneapolis. We also keynoted an activist call – Energy Democracy: A Response to Trump’s Climate-Wrecking Agenda – hosted by Public Citizen.
- We traveled to the winter meeting of regulatory commissioners from states nationwide to debate the best scale of solar development and joined a call with Audrey Zibelman, outgoing chair of New York’s Public Service Commission, on using the value of distributed energy in a way that promotes decentralized ownership.

- Our Building Local Power energy policy agenda is guiding the 100% Network in its work to help cities take all-renewables pledges from ambition to reality.
- We helped advocates in Montana with net metering issues and informed the ongoing municipalization debate in Boulder, Colo., through an op-ed frequently cited by local elected officials.
- We released a new report, *Inclusive Financing*, to support campaigns to make energy savings and solar energy accessible to everyone, regardless of credit score, renter status, or income.
- We debuted an in-depth look at the various ways electric vehicles and associated infrastructure can support energy democracy, deliver community benefits, and reduce emissions.

“Your assistance was invaluable. We are so grateful.”

*Jessica Azulay, New York Energy Democracy Alliance*

**LOOKING AHEAD:** We continue to prioritize ground-up action to expand distributed generation and ensure universal access to the clean energy economy (and its benefits). We will help communities across the country advocate for the locally driven energy policy they deserve. The centerpiece is our forthcoming Community Energy Toolkit, an interactive guide for advocates and local officials to use collective action to boost local energy economies. We’re also leading a coalition to promote rural economic development through small-scale renewable energy development via PURPA, a longstanding federal law that utilities have fought to shelve. Finally, we’re partnering with allies across the country to launch inclusive energy financing programs in Minneapolis, where the city’s unique partnership with its utilities gives locals a leg up, and in other communities.

**IMPACT STORY:** Our work was instrumental in several decision-making venues nationwide, including when the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission sought feedback on our proposed tools for ensuring that community solar is universally accessible. In addition, we helped craft and successfully push through a recommendation that the City of Minneapolis unlock nearly \$3 million/yr in new funds for its climate and energy work through a revision to its electric and gas franchise fees. We hope this sets a precedent for how other cities can finance their clean energy efforts.





## INITIATIVE

### THE PUBLIC GOOD

[www.ilsr.org/initiatives/the-public-good](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/the-public-good)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** Almost three generations of progress is now threatened by a concerted and powerful attack on government as a vehicle for protecting the general welfare and nurturing active citizenship. The Public Good Initiative uses three types of communication vehicles - articles, podcasts, and newsbites - to address this clear and present danger, and illuminate ways that states and cities here and abroad are responding.

#### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**Articles:** We published in-depth, data-rich articles on a wide variety of topics related to the common good. To extend our reach we're using our connections with well-respected online news outlets to reach an even larger audience (e.g., *Alternet*, *Huffington Post*, *Salon*, *Common Dreams*). One widely read piece published shortly after the inauguration entitled, "Taking on the Billionaires," maintained that "Over the next 6-12 months Congress will almost certainly give the richest 1 percent of the population an income tax gift totaling some \$75-150 billion ... But states can fight back." Another column, "Protecting Communities from Gentrification," discussed the rise and potential of urban land trusts as a tool for protecting communities from displacement by rising real estate prices. "Farmworkers of the World Unite!" shed light on the remarkable strategy and ultimate success of Florida's tomato pickers in gaining agency in their work environment.

**Podcasts:** David Morris, director of ILSR's Public Good Initiative, was interviewed on several occasions for ILSR's flagship podcast, *Building Local Power*, bringing his insightful perspectives on local self-reliance to bear on various issues. A few excerpts include:

◀ *The Public Good initiative illuminates the ways that states and cities are protecting the general welfare and nurturing active citizenship.*

- "No matter whether you're a conservative or a radical, you hate your utility company because it's a monopoly and remote and unresponsive. When we talk about decentralized energy sources that can be harnessed at the local level, even the rooftop level, people of all ideologies are extremely enthusiastic." (Ep. 22, *Why Local Self-Reliance?*)
- "Farmers didn't want state monopolies [when they formed the North Dakota's Non-Partisan League in the 1910s]. They wanted a public option. When their revolution resulted in a state bank, the bank didn't provide loans. It enabled and partnered with existing small banks. The state-owned flour mill is not the only one that operates in North Dakota. Farmers wanted an option that could be either owned directly by them, as cooperatives, or owned indirectly by them, by the state." (Ep. 4, *Powering a Political Revolution*)
- "In the late 19th century, 75 to 85 percent of all water and sewer utilities were owned by the private sector. It was a disaster, in part because they were managed very poorly and in part because they only wanted to serve wealthy people. Cities and counties took them over and have been running them very impressively ever since." (Ep. 9, *The Perils of Privatization*)

**Newsbites:** In 2017, we revamped our Newsbites with a packet of shorter articles and commentaries on emerging issues related to the public good sent out to subscribers twice per month. Topics covered this year include: the central role of leveraged buyouts in the widespread bankruptcies of big retailers; why dynamic pricing is price-gouging and subject to antitrust policy; the ubiquity of Germany's public banks; how Philadelphia is expanding the civic commons; and the growing strength of the global re-municipalization movement.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** Promoting policies and environments that enable the common good and an equitable future for all is more important now than ever before. Local and state-based solutions are exciting opportunities to further these outcomes. Expect frequent updates and analysis on this movement, especially on the role that ILSR will play in this movement for years to come.

"Combatting defeatism may be our single most important psychological objective in the wake of the election."

– David Morris  
from "Taking on the Billionaires."



## INITIATIVE

### WASTE TO WEALTH

[www.ilsr.org/initiatives/waste-to-wealth](http://www.ilsr.org/initiatives/waste-to-wealth)

**2017 IN REVIEW:** Our Waste to Wealth Initiative pressed forward with our longstanding work alongside leading racial and economic justice organizations to fight dirty, costly incineration projects (Arkansas, Indiana, Florida, and Maryland) and create the foundation for expanded recycling and related economic development. Our assistance last year led a number of cities and counties to reject new incineration proposals and others are now examining ways to phase out existing units. Our success wouldn't have been possible without incredible grassroots partners of youth groups, churches, businesses, physicians, and environmental organizations.

We continue to create resources to illustrate how cities that embrace recycling, reuse, composting, and zero-waste policies have the most cost-effective and environmentally sound approaches to waste management. ILSR's report, *Why Should Baltimore Recycle More?*, presented a clear, multi-phased plan for the city to double its recycling rate, save millions of dollars, and create over 500 jobs within two years. The strategies in the report are also being applied in Montgomery County, Md., at the request of the Sugarloaf Citizens Association.

#### SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In Baltimore, ILSR assisted Energy Justice Network and its efforts to improve residential curbside collection of recyclable materials.
- We presented findings from our detailed technical report, *Why Should Baltimore Recycle More?*, to a joint meeting of City departments and the Mayor's Office. The City has embraced many of the strategies ILSR recommended.

■ **ILSR Co-Founder Neil Seldman presents local recycling-based economic development opportunities to the Baltimore Commission on Sustainability.**

- The Chester, Penn., Mayor and City Council presented ILSR staffer Linda Knapp with an official recognition expressing appreciation for "the education and promotion of our recycling efforts which have been instrumental in inspiring the next generation to take pride in our community."
- We continued our collaborative work with the Save the Albatross Coalition and Captain Charles Moore to address the problem of plastics in our oceans by creating public education tools and gathering support for "Leash the Lid" legislation in California. The bill would prohibit retailers from selling beverages in bottles with caps that are not tethered to the container.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** Putting ILSR's research into concrete action, we're working closely with a number of City departments in Baltimore, including the Office of Sustainability and Department of Public Works, to implement our recycling and economic development strategies. The immediate next steps are to determine the best way forward and identify the benefits and costs of our proposed new approaches to managing materials in the waste stream. These approaches include unit pricing for waste collection, co-collection, in-city processing with mini material-recovery facilities, organics collection with distributed composting, and a resource recovery industrial park. ILSR will also maintain its extensive efforts to inform the public on such critical issues as Chinese recycling trade policies, good extended producer responsibility programs, and zero-waste planning and implementation.

**IMPACT STORY:** Our targeted work on zero-waste in Chester, Penn., has provided education and inspiration to students at three public schools. Two elementary programs were strengthened and we launched a new program at Toby Farm's Middle School. In June, 40 students presented at City Hall to the Mayor, City Council representatives and staff, and other local community groups. With presentations and artwork, the students provided an overview of the environmental benefits of recycling and zero-waste and explained their efforts to reduce trash and increase reuse, composting, and recycling practices.

"ILSR has been an active and essential partner doing work alongside us for many years. ILSR senior staff have informed the Office's work on a composting and recycling plan for the city that will shrink the waste stream and increase jobs."

– Anne Draddy,  
Baltimore Office of Sustainability

# In the MEDIA

ILSR was cited in **992** media stories in 2017.

ILSR had 39 prominent broadcast media hits in 2017.

ILSR published 51 opinion pieces in media outlets in 2017.

ILSR was published by 603 media outlets in 2017

	The Miami Herald	Los Angeles Times						MIDWEST ENERGY NEWS	Detroit Free Press		
NEW REPUBLIC				the guardian	THE WALL STREET JOURNAL		MOTHERBOARD				The Boston Globe
FINANCE · COMMERCE	The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR	The American Conservative		The Charlotte Observer	AMERICAN PROSPECT	The Atlantic	BuzzFeedNEWS	GOVERNING		Seattle Post-Intelligencer	
					TIME	Forbes	The Washington Post	Clean Technica	Slate		Chicago Tribune

“There’s really a failure to recognize what a powerhouse small businesses are,’ says [Olivia] LaVecchia ... A recent report from ILSR advocates six policy approaches that any locality can apply.”  
— Karen Loew, CityLab

“[Stacy Mitchell] says it would be wrong to think of Amazon as just a retailer. ‘They want to control the underlying infrastructure of the economy.’”  
— Lauren Silverman, National Public Radio’s Morning Edition

“[Christopher] Mitchell hopes that more money will go toward local governments and cooperatives, who have more incentive to build long-term solutions, including fiber optic networks that have the speed, capacity, and durability to meet communities’ needs for decades to come.”  
— Benny Becker, West Virginia Public Broadcasting

“Brenda Platt...urged Washington D.C. to establish more programs in schools to teach children the importance of composting... ‘There’s also a connection between the schools and the curbside program: Young composters become adult composters.’”  
— Perry Stein, The Washington Post

“John Farrell, director of the Energy Democracy Initiative at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, says that policies to transition Florida’s electricity over to renewables could go a long way toward being able to get lights back on more quickly after major storms.”  
— Kate Aronoff, In These Times

“Neil Seldman said the low cost of recycling in Baltimore right now, less than \$20 per ton, presents an economic opportunity. ‘This is a momentous point economically for Baltimore,’ Seldman said. ‘This is a cash cow for the city in terms of jobs.’”  
— Fern Shen, Baltimore Brew

# STAFF & BOARD

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Nora Goldstein<br><i>BioCycle</i>                      | Kirk Marckwald, Chair<br><i>California Environmental Associates</i>     | Andy Reicher,<br>Secretary/Treasurer<br><i>Urban Homesteading Assistance Board</i> |
| Jolie Jones<br><i>Take It Back Foundation</i>          | David Morris<br><i>ILSR (co-founder)</i>                                | Gina Schaefer<br><i>A Few Cool Hardware Stores</i>                                 |
| Christopher Lewis<br><i>Public Knowledge</i>           | Roy Priest<br><i>Alexandria Redevelopment<br/>and Housing Authority</i> | Neil Seldman<br><i>ILSR (co-founder)</i>   |
| Roberta MacDonald<br><i>Cabot Creamery Cooperative</i> |   |  |

## STAFF

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| John Bailey<br><i>Development Director</i>   | Christopher Mitchell<br><i>Director, Community Broadband<br/>Networks Initiative</i>         | Nick Stumo-Langer<br><i>Communications Manager</i>                                       |
| Linda Bilsens<br><i>Project Manager,<br/>Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders,<br/>Composting for Community Initiative</i> | Stacy Mitchell<br><i>Co-Director &amp; Director,<br/>Community-Scaled Economy Initiative</i> | Hannah Trostle<br><i>Research Associate,<br/>Community Broadband Networks Initiative</i> |
| John Farrell<br><i>Director, Energy Democracy Initiative</i>   | David Morris<br><i>Director, The Public Good Initiative</i>                                  | Karlee Weinmann<br><i>Research Associate,<br/>Energy Democracy Initiative</i>            |
| Lisa Gonzalez<br><i>Senior Researcher,<br/>Community Broadband Networks Initiative</i>                             | Brenda Platt<br><i>Co-Director &amp; Director,<br/>Composting for Community Initiative</i>   |  |
| Linda Knapp<br><i>Senior Staff, Waste to Wealth Initiative</i>   | Neil Seldman<br><i>Director, Waste to Wealth Initiative</i>                                  |  |
| Olivia LaVecchia<br><i>Research Associate,<br/>Community-Scaled Economy Initiative</i>                             | Virginia Streeter<br><i>Research Associate,<br/>Composting for Community Initiative</i>      |  |

*We thank all of this year's interns, volunteers, and fellows.  
We are grateful for all that you helped us accomplish!*

## 2017 INTERNS, FELLOWS, AND VOLUNTEERS

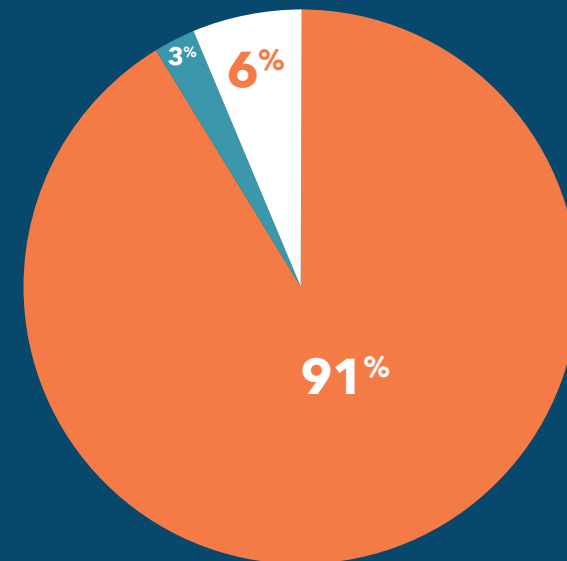
- Chloe Ashford • Christopher Barich • Matthew Douglas-May  
Colton Fagundes • Kelsey Henquinet • Md. Monirul Islam • Santa Krastina  
Matthew Marcus • Wisdom J. Nyondoh • David Odusanya • Valerie Onifade  
Emily Saba • Kate Svitavsky • Elizabeth Walsh

# INCOME & EXPENSES

## INCOME

Fiscal Year 2017  
July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

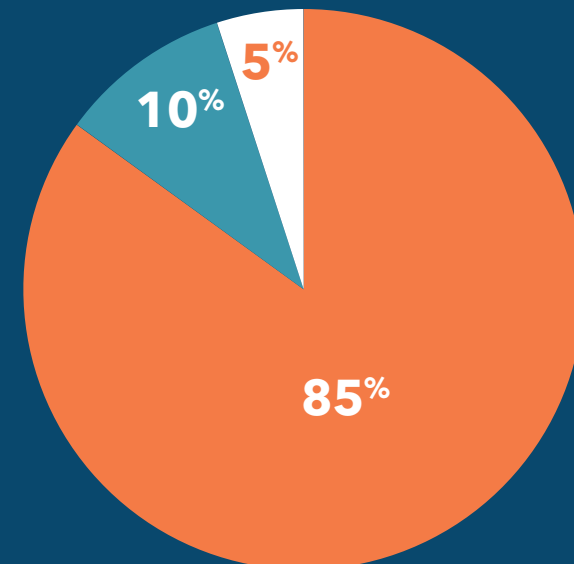
- Grants
- Contracts & Consulting
- Contributions



## EXPENSES

Fiscal Year 2017  
July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

- Program
- Fundraising
- Management & General



*Please support ILSR by donating today!*

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"[Stacy] Mitchell's article connects the dots between the increasing pace of small business closures and increased market concentration... I applaud Mitchell's call for a renewed approach to antitrust policy."

— Ann Marie Mehlum, former Associate Administrator at the U.S. Small Business Administration

"Brenda Platt and ILSR were invaluable in crafting bills to advance composting as a new economic sector in Maryland and coordinating a coalition of supporters."

— Maryland Delegate Shane Robinson (Montgomery County)



▲ Volunteers trained by ILSR turn compost during a work day at the East Capitol Urban Farm (located in a D.C. food desert). ILSR and the University of the District of Columbia sponsored this new system.

## OUR MISSION

*The Institute's mission is to provide innovative strategies, working models and timely information to support environmentally sound and equitable community development.*

*To this end, ILSR works with citizens, activists, policymakers and entrepreneurs to design systems, policies and enterprises that meet local or regional needs; to maximize human, material, natural and financial resources; and to ensure that the benefits of these systems and resources accrue to all local citizens.*

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