

2016

ANNUAL REPORT

Decentralizing Economic Power, Reinvigorating Democracy

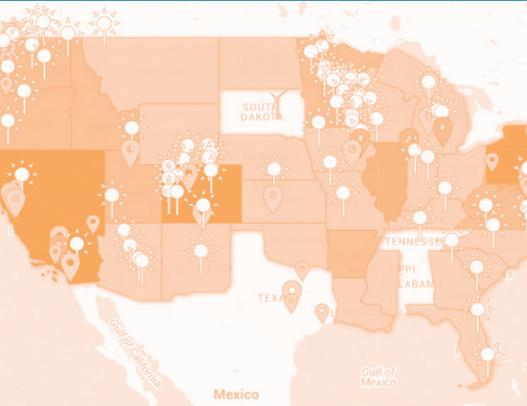


INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance

For terrific on-the-ground research on how concentration is affecting America's economy, check out @ilsr.

— @linamkhan

Lina Khan, law scholar and fellow at New America Foundation



New @ilsr map highlights growth in local #CleanEnergy production across #NYS: <https://ilsr.org/community-power-map/>

— @REV4NY

NY Governor Cuomo's Reforming the Energy Vision

Some great ideas from @ilsr for what NYC can do to support independent businesses. <https://ilsr.org/affordable-space/>

— @bradlander

Brad Lander, Deputy Leader for Policy on the New York City Council



SANDYNET

Worth reading: a canny MN cooperative that brought fiber optic Internet access to its people, via @communitynets <http://muninetworks.org/reports>

— @scrawford

Susan Crawford, professor of law and public policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SAYING WHAT YOU MEAN	4
LETTER FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS	5
IDEAS, PLACES, POLICIES	6
<i>Community Broadband Networks</i>	8
<i>Community-Scaled Economy</i>	10
<i>Composting for Community</i>	12
<i>Energy Democracy</i>	14
<i>The Public Good</i>	16
<i>Waste to Wealth</i>	18
IN THE MEDIA	20
STAFF AND BOARD	22
INCOME AND EXPENSES	23

◀ From top: Flag with corporate logos; ILSR's Community Power Map; a Main Street storefront losing its location; A visual representation of Sandy's municipal fiber-optic network.

Cover images, from left to right: Thriving Main Street; Participants in Atlanta's Community Compost Advocates program, a training program modeled after ILSR's Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders program; Ariel view of solar panels

Saying What You Mean

SUBSIDIARITY is a key principle of local self-reliance that calls for economic and political decisions to be made at the lowest reasonable level, closest to where they will have their effect.

In a **COMMUNITY-SCALED ECONOMY**, no one employer dominates, a vigorous competition prevails, and business owners tend to live within the communities they serve.

ENERGY DEMOCRACY prevails when customers shape the electricity system's design and can satisfy at least a portion of their energy needs from sources they own individually or cooperatively.

COMMUNITY BROADBAND is a high-speed network owned by a cooperative, municipality, or nonprofit that allows local citizens to set their own rules for Internet access and lessen their dependence on distant, profit-maximizing corporations.

ANTITRUST, a movement of the last Gilded Age that resulted in a body of laws designed to break up concentrated corporate power and protect the liberty of small businesses and communities, has recently come back into vogue.

When the phrase **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP** comes up, it usually translates into the public assuming the risk and the private sector reaping the rewards, but a genuine partnership is possible if the public good is paramount.

A **ZERO WASTE** community diverts 90 percent or more of its discarded materials from landfills and incinerators via reuse, recycling, and composting.

▼ *ILSR's Board of Directors and Senior Staff.*



Letter from the Co-Directors

In the past year ILSR's initiatives have gained important victories, as more people across the country embrace our practical strategies to fashion a more equitable and sustainable future.

A key challenge facing us is increasingly concentrated corporate power. Such power threatens more than the health of our economies. It corrodes our democratic institutions and undermines our sense of agency. From the bottom up, communities are challenging that concentrated power.

Scores of communities of all sizes and political stripes have built publicly owned networks that offer a real alternative to big telecom companies.

An aroused citizenry has changed the rules so that decentralized solar energy, once viewed as a bit player, has become a viable alternative to centralized, utility monopolies.

Tens of thousands of small businesses have allied with their customers to fight back against Walmart and Amazon, heighten a sense of community, and protect endangered local economies.

Hundreds of cities have thwarted attempts by monopolists to build giant incinerators and instead have bolstered and diversified local economies by maximizing materials recovery through reuse, recycling, and composting.

We applaud these successes and are proud to have been a part of the national movement for local self-determination, strong communities, and sustainable and equitable local economies. In the wake of a deeply troubling and divisive presidential campaign, these successes offer hope and guidance.

We are grateful for your ongoing support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Stacy Mitchell and Brenda Platt in black ink.

Stacy Mitchell & Brenda Platt
Co-Directors

Supporting environmentally sound and equitable community development by *changing ideas, changing places, changing policy.*

changing Ideas

ILSR's *Public Good Initiative* opened eyes and minds to the vulnerable state of American democracy and, through a series of essays, shined a light on strategies for restoring the nation's capacity for self-governance and commitment to the common good.

Our *Community-Scaled Economy Initiative's* influential reports brought new attention to the consequences of corporate concentration and inspired both local and national leaders to call for policies that would restore opportunity for small businesses.



With technical assistance from ILSR's **Waste to Wealth Initiative**, grassroots groups in Baltimore thwarted plans for a large incinerator and are now taking the lead in promoting cleaner and more just alternatives for their city.

changing Places

More than 100 graduates of our **Composting for Community Initiative's** training program have taken their skills back to their communities and launched local composting programs that are reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and building healthy food systems.

changing Policy

Thanks in large part to the research and advocacy of ILSR's **Community Broadband Networks Initiative**, Federal

Communications Commission Chair Tom Wheeler told members of Congress this year that the restoration of local municipal broadband authority should be their "A-Number One" priority.

Through our **Energy Democracy Initiative's** interactive Community Power Map, citizens across the country can now easily find, and replicate, the best city and state policies for speeding the transition to local renewable energy.





INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY BROADBAND NETWORKS

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/broadband

2016 IN REVIEW: In 2016, supported by ILSR's research and advocacy, many municipally owned networks and rural cooperatives moved forward with delivering the highest quality Internet access. We published an inspiring case study of 27 local governments in Minnesota that are creating a new model for a fiber-optic and wireless cooperative called RS Fiber Co-op. We also explored the best models for public-private partnerships in a major report: *Successful Strategies for Broadband Public-Private Partnerships*.

We've long recognized that different communities have different needs and challenges, and ILSR continues to lift up a broad range of policy solutions. One strategy - cities investing in passive fiber network elements and leasing them to one or more providers - has seen strong growth recently. Several cities in Maine have embraced this approach in working with local internet service provider GWI. Huntsville, Alabama, is building a network that Google will lease to deliver services, and Madison, Wisconsin, is officially examining how this model could work for it.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- A decade ago, Initiative Director Christopher Mitchell handed one of our first municipal broadband case studies to a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioner, who promptly responded by saying that everyone in D.C. was convinced that municipal broadband was a failure. Fast forward to this fall, when, after years of work by ILSR to change that perception, Senator Cory Booker asked FCC Chair Tom Wheeler during an oversight hearing how much of a priority Congress should put on restoring local municipal broadband authority. He replied: "A-Number One."

- We dramatically improved our video capacity, producing a video series over the summer called “Community Connections” that helped us reach new audiences. We also released our most impressive short documentary, exploring how the small Idaho city of Ammon could revolutionize the way networks are built. Finally, we created a short, fun video to explain why these networks are so important.
- We mounted a vigorous response to the biggest news in our field this year: the 6th Circuit Court’s decision to reverse the FCC’s nullification of laws in Tennessee and North Carolina that preempted municipal broadband. Although this was awful news for communities in those two states, it has helped catalyze strong legislative campaigns in each state to repeal those laws. We have been working with groups in both states to restore local authority, and we leveraged the media attention brought by the ruling to publicize the benefits of community networks.

“Communities across the country are benefiting from ILSR’s deep expertise and data-driven analysis. ILSR makes technical topics broadly accessible, creating roadmaps for advancing equitable access to the vital communications infrastructure communities need to thrive.”

*Lori McGlinchy,
Ford Foundation*

LOOKING AHEAD: Judging by the volume of interest in our inboxes, there is no shortage of communities wanting to chart their own information future. 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 right of communities to establish their own networks.

We expect to see many more cooperatives, especially electric co-ops, providing high-quality Internet access in rural regions. We have been heavily promoting co-ops as a solution and strongly encouraging the federal government to focus its rural access policies on cooperatives rather than giving billions of dollars in subsidies to the big telecom companies that have consistently failed rural communities.

IMPACT STORY: A recurring theme we hear in our work is that ILSR’s Community Broadband Networks program is essential to both informing and inspiring people who are organizing locally for better Internet access. Our weekly podcast interviews – which number well over 200 and are growing by 50 or so each year – and daily news stories offer concrete evidence that they can succeed. Every day, people turn to us to be energized, see their own work echoed in stories from across the country, and remember that there is hope for local organizing.



INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY-SCALED ECONOMY

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/independent-business

2016 IN REVIEW: This year America's growing monopoly problem drew new attention from elected officials, journalists, and activists. Many have come to see corporate concentration as a threat to democracy and a root cause of inequality, and they are calling for measures to address it. ILSR's Community-Scaled Economy Initiative helped propel this remarkable and encouraging development. As an article in *Boing Boing* noted about an influential report we published this year: "The Institute for Local Self-Reliance details the exact way that monopolistic practices have concentrated wealth in the hands of a small investor class at the expense of entrepreneurs, innovation, and the public they serve."

As we fought corporate concentration, we also campaigned for policies that would enable local businesses to thrive. A standout example of this was our *Affordable Space* report, which tackled one of the biggest challenges facing small businesses and put forward policy ideas that cities across the country are now considering.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Our report *Monopoly Power and the Decline of Small Business* drew a large audience of political, academic, and business leaders. In its coverage, the *Fiscal Times* highlighted the report's central finding of a "sharp decline in startups and independent businesses... squeezed out by large corporations using their market power," and then echoed its conclusion: "We actually have a choice here, rooted in antitrust laws."

- We shaped several big media stories. Our research underpinned a story in the *Washington Post* that examined Walmart's decision to close hundreds of stores, while *Bloomberg* drew on our work for a piece about the surprising role big banks are playing in driving local businesses out of cities.
- We continued to lift up small business voices by coordinating the Advocates for Independent Business, a coalition of national small business groups, and conducting a survey of more than 3,000 businesses, which yielded important data on issues like antitrust and access to capital.

“Thank you to ILSR for all the amazing support and solid data you provide. It is exceedingly critical to our work.”

Dana Eness,
Stay Local in New Orleans

- Stacy Mitchell, the initiative's director, spoke at events across the country. She attracted an audience of 400 at an American Booksellers Association conference, for example, and organized an inspiring session on “Policy Tools to Enable Local Businesses to Thrive” at CommonBound.
- With Amazon gaining unprecedented power across much of our economy, we produced an in-depth and widely covered report, *Amazon's Stranglehold: How the Company's Tightening Grip is Stifling Competition, Eroding Jobs, and Threatening Communities*.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2017, we will launch, alongside allies, a policy plan for reversing economic concentration and rebuilding local businesses. We see this as a key strategy for turning back the tide of economic dislocation and loss of self-determination that has affected so many communities. We'll also be publishing more eye-opening research on Amazon, promoting more debate about its impact, and calling for policies to curb its power and reform its practices. And we'll be taking a look at better models for e-commerce that are both equitable and entrepreneurial.

IMPACT STORY: In April, we published *Affordable Space: How Rising Commercial Rents Are Threatening Independent Businesses and What Cities Are Doing About It*, a groundbreaking report that analyzes the forces driving rents sky-high and outlines six broad policies for keeping space accessible to local businesses. Its release prompted phone calls from top city leaders and an invitation to present its findings on a webinar organized by the National League of Cities. The report has already influenced policy discussions in cities like Madison and New York, and local business groups across the country have made its ideas a centerpiece of their advocacy.



INITIATIVE

COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/composting/

2016 IN REVIEW: Our Composting for Community Project is advancing composting to create jobs, enhance soils, protect the climate, and reduce waste. Compost is valued for its ability to boost soil fertility, structure, and water-holding capacity, which in turn will help us better withstand severe weather from droughts to storms. Expanding composting is an effective short-term strategy for cutting methane emissions and sequestering carbon. Composting also reduces garbage, and, unlike recycling, is inherently local, with myriad benefits to the local economy. We are strengthening local composting via policy, advocacy, training, and demonstration of working models. We are unique in advocating for a distributed infrastructure rooted in community. Community leaders are needed to install and operate small-scale sites, teach other community leaders, share lessons learned, and spread enthusiasm for composting. This is why we launched and are expanding our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders Composter Training Program.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We co-convened with *BioCycle*, the third national Cultivating Community Composting Forum. From bike pedalers to urban farmers, more than 70 community composters gathered in Jacksonville, Florida, to discuss best practices for community composting. The event - the largest gathering of community composters to date - has launched a national network and movement.
- We raised awareness of composting's benefits through a series of infographics and posters, which we published in May during International Compost Awareness Week. In

- ◀ **Participants in the 2016 NSR Master Composter course hosted at Real Food Farm in Baltimore after a successful compost bin building workshop with Urban Farm Plans.**

just two months, the infographics climbed to the top ten of ILSR's most visited online resources for the entire year. They have been viewed thousands of times, reprinted by dozens of organizations, and translated into Polish and Arabic.

- Our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders Composter Training Program – created through a partnership with ECO City Farms in the D.C. metro region – was replicated and spurred the launch of community composting demonstration sites in Atlanta, with Terra Nova Compost and the Food Well Alliance, and in Baltimore, with Civic Works' Real Food Farm.
- In Montgomery County, Md., we worked with the local Food Council to craft and pass legislation requiring a composting and food recovery plan. The bill may be the first to stipulate consideration of food rescue, backyard composting, community-scaled composting, on-site composting, and on-farm composting, as well as local use of compost to support soil health and stormwater management.

LOOKING AHEAD: Our forthcoming report, *The ABCs of Composting Onsite at K-12 Schools*, which features over 24 schools in 10 states, will lay the foundation for our work to expand composting at schools. Our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilder Composter Training program is poised to grow too, with high interest across the country. We are seeking funding for a Flint program with our partners *edible flint*, Michigan State University and Extension, and the Michigan Food & Farming Systems. In Baltimore, we are piloting a youth-led bike-powered food scrap collection and composting program, based on BK ROT in Brooklyn, N.Y., with the Chesapeake Center for Youth Development. Nationally, we will continue to spread lessons learned and inspire new operations. We will co-convene the 4th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum in Los Angeles, January 2017.

IMPACT STORY: Our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilder Composter Training Program has trained 104 community leaders in the art and science of composting. These leaders are composting at dozens of urban farms, community gardens, and schools in and around Washington, D.C.; Lincoln, Neb.; Atlanta; and Baltimore. One graduate, Jeffrey Neal, partnered with the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation to create a Compost Cooperative at Howard University's Community Garden. The site has diverted more than 10,000 pounds of food scraps and produced 350 pounds of compost. The university is now interested in expanding the operation.

"The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has given me a different view—not only of changing the systems that create waste, but a platform to join others in this effort to live focused on the principles of sustainability."

*Harold E. McCray,
Baltimore City Farms Coordinator*



INITIATIVE

ENERGY DEMOCRACY

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/energy

2016 IN REVIEW: For us, building power means two things: new energy generation and also political power. For over 100 years, big energy monopolies have held both kinds of power. But even as many utility companies doubled down on monopoly control this year, their customers found energy choices. Some turned to on-site solar, and others to non-utility providers. A growing number of electricity users of all varieties, from Hawaiian households to Las Vegas casinos, opted to “exit” the grid. Utilities should note the words of Princess Leia: “the more you tighten your grip, the more [customers] will slip through your fingers.”

Aided by these market changes, our efforts to build “energy democracy” caught fire. This year, energy democracy was the subject of an entire workshop track at the CommonBound conference in Buffalo, and the concept became the central founding principle of a new national coalition working toward 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. It’s reflected in our new Community Power Map, which highlights the key connections between state policy and local energy self-reliance.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Initiative Director John Farrell shared ILSR’s research and perspective at events across the country. He delivered a well-received keynote presentation to nearly 200 people at the Midwest Energy Fair, a keynote at the Building Energy 2016 conference in Boston, Mass., and gave a plenary talk (by video) to a community solar conference in British Columbia.

◀ *John presents to a packed session at the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association annual conference in Boston in March 2016*

- Several leading writers in the energy space continued to publicize ILSR's energy work, including David Roberts at Vox, who covered our work on rural electric cooperatives and specifically highlighted our report on strategies to revive their member participation and strengthen their clean energy goals.
- ILSR's *Mighty Microgrids* caught the eye of *Inside Climate News* for a story on the future of distributed energy, and John Farrell was asked to weigh in on the presidential politics of climate for *Forbes*, where he noted that, "The science will seem a lot more credible when the solutions are a lot cheaper."
- Our new interactive Community Power Map, which shows how states can help or hinder local action on renewable energy, has already garnered wide attention, including coverage by *Midwest Energy News*.
- The U.S. EPA gave a climate leadership award to the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership, which ILSR, alongside other organizations, was instrumental in developing.

"I would like to congratulate you on the new mapping tool that you created and that is up on your website. A really great useful tool for anyone looking to explain renewable energy expansion and its breadth. Great work!"

*Miguel Yanez,
Environmental and
Energy Study Institute*

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2017, we will greatly expand our interactive tools for community activists and elected officials. We'll add to our Community Power Map, and launch a second interactive "toolkit" to give local activists and elected officials a sense of the tools they can use to create local energy change in their communities. We'll continue to explore the role of key technology, such as electric vehicles and on-site storage in fomenting energy democracy. Finally, we hope to leverage our role in the Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership to write new rules for energy access, including a fair market price for distributed renewable energy and inclusive energy financing.

IMPACT STORY: Rural electric cooperatives have a governance structure that aligns almost perfectly with "local self-reliance," so we're proud that our research and storytelling have reached the top levels of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, helping persuade them to push member co-ops toward more transparency, democracy, and a stronger focus on local renewable energy.



INITIATIVE

THE PUBLIC GOOD

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/the-public-good

2015 IN REVIEW: This election year set in high relief the central issues of our age: the scale of governance, the relationship between the “me” and the “we,” our obligations to the less fortunate and to future generations, the shape and health of democracy in an Internet age of instant communication, and the role that the pursuit of private profit should have in effecting the public good. ILSR’s Public Good Initiative has addressed these questions, and more, through 30 essays, short and long. Aside from their publication on ILSR’s web site, they’ve been given exposure in national media outlets, including *Salon*, *Huffington Post*, *Alternet*, and *Common Dreams*, as well as daily newspapers such as the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In a series of essays, we illuminated the vulnerable state of democracy in America. After more than a century of expanding the franchise and making the ballot box more accessible, the U.S. is now moving in the opposite direction.
- Because the next President could nominate perhaps as many as four Supreme Court Justices, we provided citizens with a guide to 23 recent, closely decided Supreme Court decisions that could be reversed by the replacement of just one or two Justices.
- In response to a column by a *Star Tribune* business columnist, we explored the role of government in promoting the public good, drawing context and examples from several Minnesota communities.

◀ *North Dakota farmers hitched their wagons to the NonPartisan League and rode them to the Statehouse and a political revolution circa 1915.*

- Noting the widespread disillusionment with the two major political parties as possible vehicles for progressive change we told the story of the North Dakota Nonpartisan League (NPL) using a variety of media. This century-old movement endorsed candidates of any party who supported its platform. Within 18 months of its founding in 1915, the NPL had taken political control of the state and created institutions, like the Bank of North Dakota. It also created a culture protective of public and local ownership that continues to inform state politics today. The widely distributed essay was accompanied by an extended radio interview and an ILSR podcast.

“David Morris’s Public Good writing offers a steady illumination of the abuses of power and the potential of communities... Morris lays out a framework that speaks to this time, to its dangers and opportunities. Local Self-Reliance may be our only achievable strategy in an era when the federal government is actively opposed to the public good. So sign up.”

Jim Hightower, syndicated radio and newspaper columnist, and former elected commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture

- Using the occasion of the final season of the popular BBC television series, *Downton Abbey*, which grappled with the issue of local authority in the health system, we produced a widely read essay that explored the need for community-based health institutions in an age of highly capitalized and highly specialized medicine.
- We produced an investigation of the Pentagon and its extraordinary immunity to anti-government rhetoric, despite accounting for half of federal discretionary spending, being unable to pass an independent audit, and having an unparalleled track-record of waste and inefficiencies.
- We launched the *Public Good Newsfeed*, a biweekly compilation of stories on timely issues and began to post pertinent archival interviews and presentations.

LOOKING AHEAD: The 2016 election is over. Now it’s time to pursue new rules and, when necessary, to build new institutions to promote the common good and an equitable future. The need, opportunity and capacity for progressive change, beginning at the local and state level, have rarely been greater. We expect to both report on and participate in this bottom-up movement.



WASTE TO WEALTH

www.ilsr.org/initiatives/waste-to-wealth

2015 IN REVIEW: Our Waste to Wealth Initiative has expanded our work, in partnership with leading racial and economic justice organizations, to help low-income and minority communities protect local ecosystems and create living wage jobs.

We provide training, research, and advocacy assistance to grassroots leaders and help them to start up waste-based remanufacturing and reuse companies. This year, we have assisted local groups in Baltimore; Montgomery County, Md.; Fayetteville, Ark.; St. Lucie County, Fla.; and Indianapolis on anti-incineration and zero waste implementation.

ILSR has also continued to educate policy officials about the dangers of ceding control of their solid waste to national and international corporations, a development that may destroy a reuse and recycling ecosystem painstakingly nurtured by a generation of grassroots and small business activism.

Our Pennsylvania based Zero Waste Pilot Project continued its success at two elementary schools in the Chester-Upland School District and is poised to grow. Aside from promoting recycling, student GreenTeam members expanded their portfolio to address food waste issues, student nutrition, and strategies to support the schools' reading goals. ILSR worked with Stetser Elementary School to establish a composting unit in the school's garden that now handles some of the cafeteria's vegetative scraps.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ILSR undertook research on solid waste and recycling related business opportunities in Mississippi and identified two companies that have begun exploring whether to locate in the state.
- 2016 was a year marked by several victories as citizens groups defeated incinerators planned for Baltimore, Prince George's County, Md., and Washington, D.C. With materials-destroying incineration off the table, we are now helping these groups promote local, green, job-creating enterprises and programs based on materials recovery.
- Officials in Chester County, Penn., reported that ILSR's work in their school district has contributed to the 14% increase in the recycling rate in the past 2 years.

“The Institute for Local Self Reliance has supported grassroots efforts in Curtis Bay—Brooklyn to identify positive alternatives to the plan to build the nation’s largest trash burning incinerator. We are excited to continue to build this collaboration as we raise the bar for Fair Development in our community and the region that meet our basic needs without sacrificing our health and environment. ILSR has supported at community meetings and strategy sessions to expand the space for creative thinking about how to make Zero Waste a reality in our city.”

*Greg Sawtell,
Director, United Workers
of Baltimore*

LOOKING AHEAD: 2017 promises a continued battle between two visions: materials destruction vs. materials recovery, and materials-based economic development that maximizes the benefit to the local community vs. one controlled by and largely benefiting large absentee corporations. We will continue to work with elected officials, small business groups, and community organizations to promote local control and maximize value added. Our primary focus will be on Frederick and Carroll Counties in Maryland and Fredericksburg and Stafford Counties in Virginia, but we will continue to provide assistance and support throughout the country.

IMPACT STORY: In 2017 we once again learned that best way to defeat proposed incinerators is to educate the host communities about their pitfalls and suggest more valuable alternatives. Over a three year period ILSR was honored to be able to offer assistance to grassroots organizations in the South Baltimore neighborhoods of Curtis Bay-Brooklyn Hawkins Point in their remarkable, sustained campaign that ultimately convinced the Maryland State Department of the Environment to pull the permit on a proposed 4,000-ton-per-day incinerator in those long suffering industrial communities.

In the MEDIA

ILSR was cited
in **440**
media stories
in 2016.

“There are signs, however, that municipal broadband proponents were anticipating Wednesday’s outcome — and are already moving to adapt. One approach? Focus on improving cities’ abilities to lay fiber optic cables that then any Internet provider can lease; so far, only one state, Nebraska, has banned this so-called ‘dark fiber’ plan, said Christopher Mitchell, who directs the Institute for Local Self-Reliance’s Community Broadband Networks Initiative. ‘We’re pursuing strategies that are harder for the cable and telephone companies to defeat,’ said Mitchell.”

Washington Post

“These out-of-town investors, once they arrive in Cleveland, Nashville, or Milwaukee, have a tendency to rely on relationships with national brokers and large-chain tenants, says Stacy Mitchell, co-director of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, a Washington-based nonprofit. The result, she says, is that small businesses that help give each city its unique character struggle to stay alive.”

Bloomberg Business

“In a recent paper focusing on Los Angeles, Neil Seldman of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance identified citizen activism as the critical difference between communities with high versus low recycling rates.”

Governing Magazine

“During a keynote speech, John Farrell of the Institute of Local Self-Reliance told the energy fair that a federal study has shown as much of 40 percent of electricity in Wisconsin could come from rooftop solar. ‘That’s not counting parking lots where we could put solar,’ he said. ‘Brownfields, landfills, solar anywhere else you can think of. That’s an enormous amount we can do at a local level, right where we use electricity at minimal transmission costs,’ Farrell said.”

Wisconsin Public Radio

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We thank all of this year's interns, volunteers, and fellows.

We are grateful for all that you helped us accomplish!

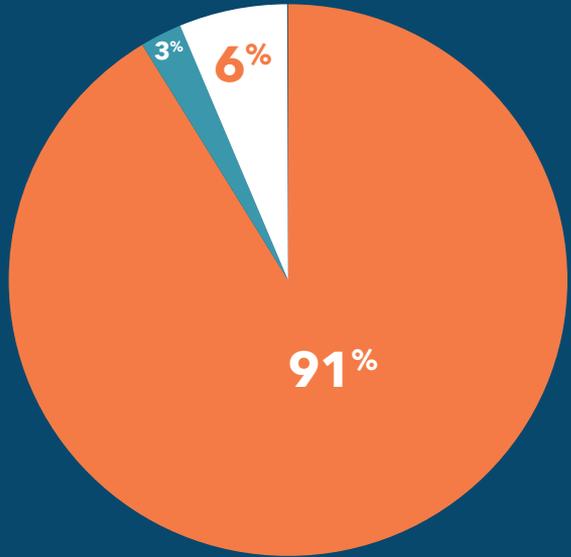
INCOME & EXPENSES

INCOME

Fiscal Year 2016

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

- Grants
- Contracts & Consulting
- Contributions

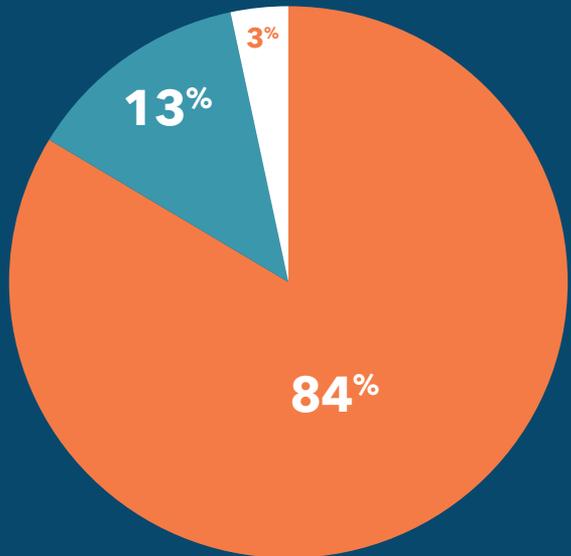


EXPENSES

Fiscal Year 2016

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

- Program
- Fundraising
- Management & General





▲ First Lady Michelle Obama visits ILSR staffer Linda Bilsens' backyard garden and composting system, with ILSR partner Urban Farm Plans. (Credit: Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)

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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