

2018
ANNUAL REPORT



BUILDING LOCAL POWER

@stacyfmitchell is brilliant, as usual, on the inter-relationship between consolidated corporate power, small business, and workers

— @Econ_Marshall
Marshall Steinbaum, Research Director at the Roosevelt Institute



This guy @johnffarrell may be the next Amory Lovins - he doesn't make new facts as much as present the data before you in important new ways

— @RabagoEnergy
Karl R. Rabago, Executive Director of the Pace Energy and Climate Center

Waiting in line at my local broadband monopoly seems as good a time as any to share this important new report on broadband monopolies from @ilsr @MuniNetworks

— @ntnsndr
Nathan Schneider, noted author and Assistant Professor, University of Colorado, Boulder



A must-read! @ilsr goes step by step into how local governments can start a home composting program, saving over 1,400 and 5,000 tons of food waste per 10,000 households! @PlattBrenda

— @GAIAanoburn
GAIA is the world's leading anti-incineration coalition

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◀ Inside Cover Photos: Stacy Mitchell speaking at a Congressional briefing on dominant Internet platforms; John Farrell (r) and Timothy DenHerder-Thomas at Shiloh Temple's solar garden; Christopher Mitchell (r) joins Will Rinehart, Lev Gonick, and Nicol Turner-Lee on a broadband panel; Brenda Platt (r) and zero waste advocates presented testimony on the federal Zero Waste Development & Expansion Act.

Cover: Our "monopoly and blank check" props we used to defeat a nuclear energy subsidy bill in Minnesota; ILSR's Linda Bilsens-Brolis (bottom right) with members of the East Capitol Urban Farm Compost Project in Washington, D.C.; ILSR is working to protect main streets across the country.

Tune in to ILSR Podcasts



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

LISTEN: [ILSR.ORG/BUILDING-LOCAL-POWER](https://ilsr.org/building-local-power)

THIS YEAR'S GUESTS:

David Dayen • Dale Ross • Austin Frerick • Sarita Gupta • Laura Flanders • Dan Knapp
Mary Lou Van Deventer • Marshall Steinbaum • Vanessa Williamson • Brendan Greeley
Steve Fenberg • Jacqui Patterson • Chuck Marohn • Paul Connett • Matt Rantanen



Photo courtesy of Next System Project

"Media is not different from Amazon. Media is not different from Walmart. This is a monopoly problem in a economy of inequality, and what we're losing is information that is critical to our health."

— Laura Flanders, best-selling author and founder of *The Laura Flanders Show*.
(*Building Local Power*, Ep. 45)

ITUNES REVIEWS:

"I appreciate the varied topics on different aspects of community power and the dissection of corporate and monopoly power."

"Great show. Highly recommend."

"Enlightening. Hate to use a much overused word these days, but this podcast is SMART."

"Unique discussion on place-based policy. Valuable research and information to supplement Institute for Local Self Reliance's site."

"Each episode teaches me something I never knew before. Definitely recommend subscribing to their podcast."

**MORE PODCASTS AT
[ILSR.ORG/PODCASTS](https://ilsr.org/podcasts)**



Letter from the Co-Directors

On the eve of our 45th birthday, thanks to our grassroots partners and financial supporters, ILSR is providing a strong counterpoint to the concentration of wealth and power that poses as great a threat to democracy as any domestic challenge the country has known.

This past year, a growing number of community leaders, elected officials, journalists, and others came to view concentration as a root cause of rising inequality, disappearing local businesses, and the subversion of democracy. ILSR's work has significantly influenced and catalyzed this growing movement. Our widely shared analysis of Amazon's dominance, courtesy of our Community-Scaled Economy Initiative, provides the clearest example of many.

Our Energy Democracy Initiative takes a different, but parallel approach. We're illuminating the ways that technology supports decentralization even as utilities fight to retain their power. The rise of affordable rooftop solar and better batteries is allowing Americans to challenge the century-old system of monopoly electric companies. Our new interactive tools are helping cities, entrepreneurs, and community groups take advantage of this to build a better energy system owned by its users.

Our Community Broadband Networks Initiative has made public ownership of telecommunications infrastructure the default for a growing number of communities no longer content to be held back by telecommunications monopolies. The daily news stories and weekly podcasts inspire an extensive network of technical experts, lawyers, entrepreneurs, activists, and local elected officials. Our community map identifies more than 500 municipally or cooperatively owned broadband networks serving millions of people.

Our Waste to Wealth Initiative is showing cities how they can capture the lost riches in their waste stream and, by doing so, foster local companies, create jobs, and obviate the need for approaches like incineration and landfilling that entail both pollution and corporate control.

At the same time, we're helping cities see the multiple benefits of food waste recovery and organics composting. Through national convenings, training sessions, and model legislation, ILSR's Composting for Community Initiative is now working with dozens of local governments and community groups to reap these benefits, from richer soils, to more connected neighborhoods, to climate protection.

The challenges are daunting. Communities not only have to take on global corporations but also preemption from higher levels of government that would strip their authority to do so. But our work in the trenches gives us hope and encouragement. This annual report offers a window into that work and our vision.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Stacy Mitchell and John Farrell in black ink.

Stacy Mitchell and John Farrell
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 | FINDLAY, OHIO – Inspired by ILSR’s reporting on public broadband networks, the city is building a fiber network to serve schools, the public library, and several municipal departments.

2 | VERMONT – With guidance from ILSR, activists in 13 towns are pursuing a shared regional fiber network, a rarely implemented but rapidly-emerging solution for rural communities.

COMMUNITY SCALED ECONOMY:

1 | TULSA, OKLA. – Drawing on ILSR’s policy models, City Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper crafted and passed an ordinance limiting dollar stores, which have been crowding out local grocers in Tulsa’s African American neighborhoods.

2 | JERSEY CITY, N.J. – Jersey City relied on ILSR’s research to enact a policy that caps the amount of retail spaces chains are allowed to occupy in its downtown, thereby ensuring ample opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY:

1 | SECAUCUS, N.J. – ILSR trained a group of passionate youth leaders and they designed and implement a community-scaled food waste composting program.

2 | WASHINGTON, D.C. – ILSR led the effort to enact the Home Composting Incentives Act, a model for other cities, that provides training and rebates for residential home composting.

ENERGY DEMOCRACY:

1 | MINNESOTA – ILSR stopped a major nuclear power subsidy proposal in the Minnesota Legislature. Our statewide campaign created a series of parody videos of utility advertisements that played a key role in the bill’s demise.

2 | NEW YORK – Through a timely op-ed and strategic campaign advice, ILSR supported energy democracy advocates working to ensure fair compensation for solar energy projects.

WASTE TO WEALTH:

1 | BALTIMORE, MD. – ILSR continued to advance state-of-the-art recycling solutions in the city through our service on the Mayor’s Sanitation Commission. Our glass recycling recommendations, for example, could save the city at least \$1 million annually.

2 | CHESTER, PENN. – Elementary students participating in ILSR’s Chester Zero Waste School Project showcased their recycling activities and received accolades from the Mayor and other officials.

NATIONAL IMPACT

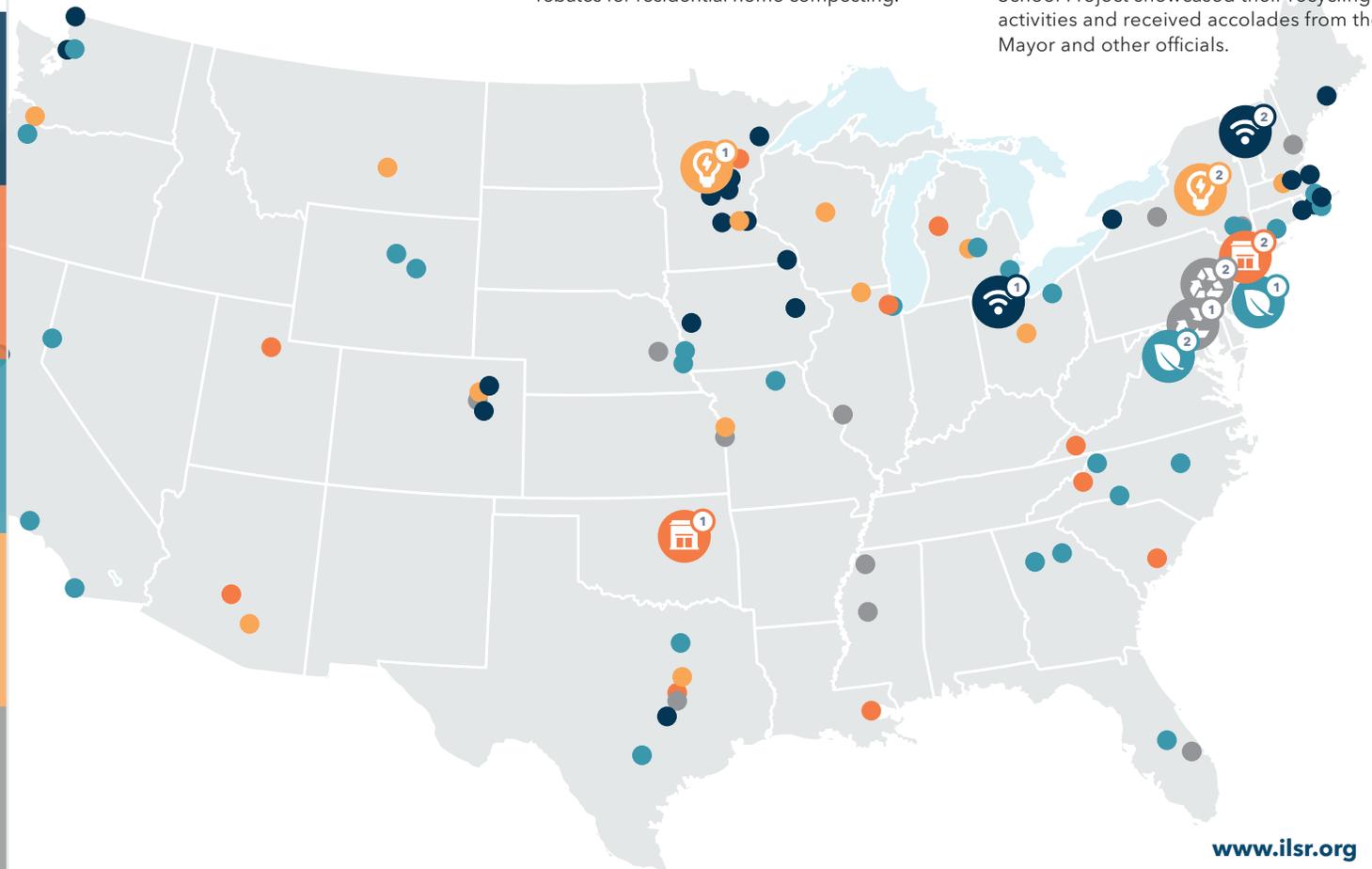
 ILSR continued to lead and direct the policy efforts of Next Century Cities, a network of cities fighting to preserve local authority to provide better broadband solutions.

 Advocates for Independent Business, a network representing more than 25,000 small businesses, relied on ILSR’s policy advice to push for stronger antitrust enforcement and the closure of corporate tax loopholes.

 ILSR launched the national Community Composter Coalition, which is providing in-person workshops, webinars, legal assistance, and policy models to leaders across 20 states and growing.

 Advocates across the country, inspired by ILSR’s 2018 Community Power Scorecard, which ranks each state’s clean energy policies, advanced new renewable energy programs.

 In a widely praised exposé, “Single Stream Recycling: Explaining the Waste Knot,” ILSR detailed the problems caused by corporate consolidation in the waste sector, including showing how concentration has favored landfills and incineration over recycling and reuse.





INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY BROADBAND NETWORKS

www.ilsr.org/broadband

2018 IN REVIEW: We saw interest in our Community Broadband Networks Initiative's research and technical assistance grow substantially this year. The number of community networks across the country continues to grow and our Community Networks Map now tracks over 750 community broadband networks including more than 250 communities served by rural electric co-ops. This growth comes despite the fact that some 20 states have barriers in place designed to discourage or prevent communities from investing in this infrastructure.

This year, we substantially ramped up mapping projects to provide a striking and easy-to-grasp illustration of the scale and scope of America's broadband problem. A key project mapped the (poor) broadband availability of six of the largest providers: Comcast, Charter, AT&T, CenturyLink, Frontier, and Verizon. Despite receiving billions in federal funding to help rural Americans gain better access to the Internet, these big telephone monopolies have utterly failed many regions and millions of rural households. To aid broadband development in rural America, we profiled successful rural cooperative programs and highlighted the efforts of small service providers.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Over 370 media stories mentioned our work, including citations in several national stories that were picked up and reprinted in over 500 additional outlets (i.e. A *National Public Radio* story on Fort Collins, Colo., creating a broadband utility, *Associated Press* story on Montana mandating net neutrality for state contracts, and a *USA Today* story on how to save money on Internet bills).

ILSR's Christopher Mitchell interviews former Counselor to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler, Gigi Sohn, at the Great Lakes Connect conference.

- ILSR's Christopher Mitchell was featured in a video put together by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) detailing how the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) actions to rescind net neutrality rules would harm rural America. The video received nearly 100,000 views.
- By invitation, we provided testimony on a California bill that, once passed, removed state restrictions on publicly-owned options for rural Internet access.
- Our educational campaigns helped block misguided legislation that would have created barriers to community broadband in Virginia and Michigan.
- Our staff presented at more than 15 events this year and provided technical assistance to more than 20 communities.
- In a deep data dive in Rochester, Minn., we exposed holes in the FCC's broadband data by identifying many areas where available broadband services didn't match the agency's figures.

LOOKING AHEAD: In the fall of 2018, we launched a new service called the *Community Network Quickstart Program* to motivate more communities to move from the sidelines to action. In collaboration with NEO Partners, the program will offer affordable analysis to communities that are considering deploying or extending their broadband networks. The service will prepare communities to work with network service providers and design firms by providing a set of realistic options, costs, and basic background for a variety of deployment options. We are also planning to disseminate sustainable solutions for urban public housing Internet access by highlighting local policies and authority that do not require new funding or changes in law.

IMPACT STORY: Our broadband team remains indispensable as the foundation for the community broadband network movement. At every event this year, attendees praised our writing and in many cases at least one person claimed to have listened to each of the 330+ *Community Broadband Bits* podcast episodes. Our impact goes well beyond just the community network movement. Small Internet access providers have reached out as well, saying our materials helped them to succeed in markets rigged in favor of big monopolies.

"The wealth of resources produced by Chris and his team is astonishing in its breadth, and even more impressive, these resources are available for groups like ours to use in educational campaigns without charge."

— Erin L. Wynia, legislative counsel,
North Carolina League of Municipalities



INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY-SCALED ECONOMY

www.ilsr.org/independent-business

2018 IN REVIEW: The reach and impact of ILSR’s Community-Scaled Economy Initiative has grown significantly this year as more lawmakers, activists, and journalists began to see the dangers of corporate concentration and turn to our work for insights and solutions. Our analysis of Amazon has been particularly influential in shaping the debate about tech monopolies and galvanizing a growing effort to restore the antitrust laws to their original power and purpose.

At the same time, we’re providing tools and guidance to local leaders working to build the economic capacity of their communities from the ground up. We’re showing cities how to use land use and other policy tools to grow local businesses, build a more equitable economy, and counter corporate concentration directly.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We published an influential cover story, “Amazon Doesn’t Just Want to Dominate the Market—It Wants to Become the Market,” in *The Nation*.
- We informed federal policymakers about the effects of concentrated corporate power on small businesses, workers, and communities. ILSR staff presented our research at a Congressional briefing, submitted comments to the Federal Trade Commission, met with senior staff on the Hill, and spoke at several events in Washington.
- Our work reached an even wider audience through guest appearances on national radio shows and popular podcasts, including *The Majority Report* with Sam Seder,

ILSR’s Stacy Mitchell speaking at a Congressional briefing with U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), Chris Lewis, Lina Khan, and Rana Foroohar.

and speaking engagements hosted by *Consumer Reports*, the National League of Cities, and others.

- We created a policy platform that details local, state, and federal strategies to reverse corporate concentration and grow independent businesses. It features policies across five pillars: the built environment, economic development, access to capital, equitable taxes, and fair and open competition. Alongside the platform, we released a step-by-step “Local Policy Action Toolkit.”
- We fielded more than 50 requests for technical assistance from local communities. *Bloomberg Businessweek* profiled our work helping Jersey City, San Francisco, and other cities ensure ample space and opportunity for local entrepreneurs by adopting zoning policies that prevent chains from overrunning commercial districts.
- U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) invited us to script and narrate two videos about Amazon – one on its monopoly power and another on its labor model. They have received over 2 million views.

LOOKING AHEAD: This is a critical moment. Concentration has produced an economy that delivers wealth and power to a few, while marginalizing everyone else. Our work has helped policymakers see the threat. In the coming year, we’ll focus on spurring them to act. Through new collaborations, we’ll help to create effective campaigns. We’ll produce popular education resources to mobilize grassroots support. And we’ll continue to publish research, policy guides, podcasts, and graphics that lend ILSR’s perspective, lift up small business voices, and share stories of communities taking action.

IMPACT STORY: In July, we published “Amazon’s Next Frontier: Your City’s Purchasing,” an in-depth investigation of the company’s secretive push to capture the spending of local governments. Our reporting revealed the details of a shady contract that Amazon quietly negotiated to provide supplies to hundreds of cities. We showed how the company is using the deal to eliminate competition and monopolize public dollars. Several national news outlets covered our findings and, thanks to our research, cities are now rethinking their relationship with Amazon. The City of Tempe, Ariz., for example, backed away from signing on to Amazon’s contract and has instead bolstered its commitment to buy from local businesses.

“Research from ILSR... helped make our case. The sample policies were a huge help.”

— Vanessa Hall-Harper,
City Councilor, Tulsa, Okla.

“An amazing and essential piece of journalism.”

— Zephyr Teachout, law professor,
on Stacy Mitchell’s cover story on
Amazon for The Nation.



INITIATIVE

COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY

www.ilsr.org/composting

2018 IN REVIEW: ILSR’s Composting for Community Initiative is leading and growing the community-scaled composting movement. This year we were busy convening composters nationally, establishing best management practices and legal guides, conducting trainings, advocating for compost-friendly policies, and publishing cornerstone reports. Problems associated with food waste are gaining more widespread attention and we saw an uptick in interest from policymakers in our solutions to avoid garbage, conserve resources, create jobs, alleviate hunger, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our analysis and promotion of model policies and programs has created a strong foundation to enable the community-scaled composting sector to expand.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In partnership with ILSR, Baltimore City’s Office of Sustainability released a “Food Waste Recovery Strategy” that embraces our distributed food recovery hierarchy, prioritizing waste prevention and edible food rescue, followed by community-scaled composting.
- In D.C., we led passage of the Home Composting Incentives Amendment Act of 2018 to create a rebate up to \$75 for home composting bins and a training program.
- Our report, *Yes! In My Backyard: A Home Composting Guide for Local Government*, concludes that home composting is far more important than previously thought. For every 10,000 households composting at home, 1,400 to 5,000 tons per year could be diverted from collection, with savings in avoided disposal costs alone of \$72,000 to \$250,000.

◀ Community bin build organized by ILSR to expand composting capacity at the Filbert Street Community Garden for the Baltimore Compost Collaborative.

■ ILSR convened the 5th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum, held in Atlanta, with attendees from 17 states plus D.C., Haiti, and Puerto Rico. Our subsequent webinar series for community composters focused on business structures, legal and policy issues, and bike-powered hauling. We ended 2018 with the release of our *Guide to Best Management Practices for Community Composting*.

■ We adapted our Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders composter training program to teach government agency staff as well as backyard composters, youth leaders, and middle and high school students about composting.

■ Our new *Guide to Composting Onsite at Schools* introduces the basics of composting at K-12 schools, why composting is important, steps to get started, and how to troubleshoot.

■ We presented at numerous events, including providing testimony at a Congressional hearing on the Zero Waste Development & Expansion Act at the invitation of U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison.

LOOKING AHEAD: We plan to sharpen our strategy to reach more K-12 students through educational programming and partnerships. Our vision is to inspire young people and teachers to starve a landfill (and incinerator!), feed the soil, and protect the climate by converting food scraps into compost. When added to soil, compost sequesters carbon and enhances soil fertility, structure, and water-holding capacity. We believe engaging youth is necessary for durable change. In 2019, we will launch an interactive community composting map to showcase youth activities, bike-powered haulers, worker-owned compost cooperatives, and other community-scale models along with policies to advance a distributed food waste recovery infrastructure.

IMPACT STORY: With our partners, United Workers and the Filbert Street Community Garden, we launched the Baltimore Compost Collective, a youth-engaged enterprise that trains participants in workforce skills, food access programming, and community-scaled composting in the Curtis Bay neighborhood of Baltimore. Youth collect and convert hundreds of pounds of food scraps each week into compost, which is utilized to grow food. ILSR provided compost training, technical and web support, client relations, and funding, and led a community-bin-build to expand capacity. The Collective is bringing jobs, income, and skills to a community lacking both economic opportunity and access to fresh food.

“The resources that you put out and share have been invaluable tools for educating the communities I work in, and for educating me in the work I do.”

— Tracie Troxler,
Sunshine Community Compost



INITIATIVE

ENERGY DEMOCRACY

www.ilsr.org/energy

2018 IN REVIEW: Years from now, history books will mark 2018 as a turning point. The concentrated power of energy sector incumbents continues to wane, as a clean, distributed energy revolution gains momentum. This year, competitively priced power from solar and storage caused two states to call a halt on new gas power plants. Home energy storage grew exponentially and businesses cut costs by pairing solar with onsite batteries.

All of these developments added more fuel to ILSR’s energy democracy vision. We provided hard numbers on the economic opportunity of energy storage paired with local solar. We told the story of many communities setting (and achieving) ambitious renewable energy goals. We continued to expand our interactive tools for communities to understand and manage their energy future. ILSR documented and publicized successful model programs that provided cities and towns with the means to realize the vision of energy democracy, and to take charge of their energy systems.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We produced a 30-minute, content rich video presentation to enhance the community renewable energy section of NAACP’s Just Energy Toolkit.
- To widespread praise, we issued *Reverse Power Flow: How Solar+Batteries Shift Electric Grid Decision Making from Utilities to Consumers*. The report outlined how to create a democratic energy system where customers can choose distributed energy options that benefit themselves and the greater grid.

■ ILSR’s John Farrell interviews Anya Schoolman, executive director of Solar United Neighbors, for the Local Energy Rules podcast.

- We launched a special series of our Local Energy Rules podcast called “Voices of 100%” that highlights local leaders and takes a deeper dive into the communities that have adopted 100% renewable energy commitments.
- We had a big victory in convincing the City of Minneapolis to adopt an increase in the utility franchise fees (applied to natural gas and electricity service providers), which raised \$2-3 million per year for critical local climate change activities. We’re particularly proud of funds dedicated to an inclusive energy financing feasibility study, community engagement, and direct incentives and financing aid for residents and businesses.
- ILSR’s John Farrell was elected to the steering committee of RE-AMP, a network of more than 130 clean energy advocacy organizations across eight midwestern states with a shared vision to reduce regional emissions by 80% in the coming decades.

LOOKING AHEAD: In the next year, ILSR’s Energy Democracy Initiative plans to double down on creating tools for communities seeking greater control over their energy future. The *Voices of 100%* podcast series will continue to tell the story of locally led clean energy movements and efforts to bring renewable energy to all. A new edition of the Community Power Scorecard, based on our interactive map, will help advocates see how their states’ help or hinder local clean energy. More stories and impact analyses will be added to the nation’s first interactive resource for local climate action, our Community Power Toolkit. A new report will highlight the rising power of community choice energy, giving cities the power to choose their energy supply.

IMPACT STORY: As was the case in several states this year, the largest electric utility company in Minnesota came shopping for legislation to shield shareholders from the risk of costly nuclear power plant retrofits. In partnership with Community Power in Minneapolis, we created clever parody videos and big, eye-catching props that inspired a broad coalition to label the bill a “blank check.” By the waning hours of the legislative session, the bill had drawn concern from lawmakers across the political spectrum. It did not pass.

“Huge congrats on your new report. Really great stuff, and all in one read. I’m going to make it required reading for folks!”

— Jeff Capella,
Resource Media, Colorado



◀ Libraries are critical but threatened civic spaces. Photo credit: CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Diliff>

INITIATIVE

FROM THE DESK OF DAVID MORRIS

📌 www.ilsr.org/david-morris-desk

2018 IN REVIEW: ILSR co-founder David Morris transitioned to a new role this year to become an ILSR Distinguished Fellow. David focused on bringing clarity to systemic questions: how to move toward a society in which economic and policy decisions affecting us are made closest to us; how to democratize ownership and production; and how to rebuild a sense of community, mutual aid, and respect. A series of ongoing commentaries and a regular newsletter, “David’s Picks,” are featured in a new section of ILSR’s website titled, *From the Desk of David Morris*. These resources address the challenge of developing equitable, sustainable and just societies in a world increasingly ruled by giant corporations and autocratic governments.

COMMENTARIES:

- One widely read piece, “How to Save the Internet,” for example, described the federal government’s abdication of responsibility to protect net neutrality and privacy and its willingness to condone ever more concentration in the telecommunications sector. The commentary concluded, “The only sure fire strategy to regain control of this vital underpinning of modern economies is for us to own the broadband networks ourselves. Only then will we able make the rules that serve the public interest.”
- Another commentary examined the world’s rush to embrace digital currencies and discusses how Sweden, the nation furthest along toward a cashless society stepped back and began to develop policies that address two fundamental questions: “How do we balance our desire for convenience with our desire for agency and equity? How

do we protect national security and maintain a public payment system if our digital money is managed only by private interests.”

- David wrote about the ongoing civil war between states and the federal government over the future of healthcare. While a new administration punched holes in the safety net, states, with varying degrees of success, scrambled to patch them up. “Millions undoubtedly will become casualties of this war and lose access to affordable, high quality health care,” the essay predicts, “But perhaps out of the battle many states will gain the will, the experience, the wisdom, and the institutional capacity to create their own superior health care systems.”
- Several columns described innovative policies embraced by countries with populations no larger than small American states: Estonia’s free transit system; New Zealand’s feminist policies that underpin its progressive program; Uruguay, where a former guerrilla movement became the country’s largest political party and now leads a government that is aggressively promoting social and economic justice.

DAVID’S PICKS: The newsletter, “David’s Picks,” offered brief reports on progressive developments here and abroad: the global “remunicipalization” movement as cities take back privatized public assets; Berkeley’s judicial victory that may give cities the authority to halt the sale of historic post offices; the rapid expansion of rural cooperatives that offer superior telecommunications services compared to the incumbent monopolies; the creation of a European-wide movement that has won gig workers the same rights and benefits as regular workers; the development by Barcelona’s new municipal government of innovative software that makes government and policymaking increasingly transparent and participatory.

LOOKING AHEAD: In 2019, we look forward to developing a larger body of work and an encompassing argument for the possibilities and benefits of a ground-up recreation of our economic and political systems.

“David Morris’s columns and writing are by far the best single place to visit first if you want to go deeper, and think clearer.”

– Gar Alperovitz, co-founder of The Democracy Collaborative and author most recently of *What Then Must We Do: Straight Talk About The Next American Revolution*.



INITIATIVE

WASTE TO WEALTH

www.ilsr.org/waste-to-wealth

2018 IN REVIEW: This year our Waste to Wealth Initiative focused on grassroots anti-incineration battles to close facilities in Baltimore and Montgomery County, Md., and prevent the use of garbage incinerators in northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. We prepared a detailed plan to phase out the incinerator in Montgomery County for a coalition of citizen and environmental groups, and pressed forward with implementation of policies and programs introduced in our 2017 technical report, *Why Should Baltimore Recycle More?*.

ILSR’s work has catalyzed public discussion on critical recycling and waste issues rarely covered by the general media or trade journals. We published insightful articles on the negative impact of oversized single stream processing plants, efforts by big soda corporations to override local and state recycling legislation, how cities and counties can overcome obstacles posed by Chinese recycling restrictions, and the unique qualities and benefits of unit pricing, or metering, of residential garbage.

SELECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In Baltimore, ILSR’s Neil Seldman was appointed to the Mayor’s Sanitation Committee and the Office of Sustainability Waste and Recycling Committee based on the strength of our 2017 recycling report and our input to the Office’s citywide composting plan.
- We completed a report on glass recycling for the Washington, DC, Dept. of Public Works with recommendations that could save the city at least \$1 million annually. We also alerted the city to potential sources of increased revenue with a shift in management of the city’s two important trash transfer stations.

- We presented to a congressional briefing on the Zero Waste Development & Expansion Act (HR 1034) providing real-world examples of the economic, social, and environmental benefits of recycling and reuse.
- We wrapped up a two-year Zero Waste School Project in Chester, Penn., which will continue to expand recycling and composting at various schools under the watchful eyes of student led “Green Team” representatives and key members of the school district administrative team.

LOOKING AHEAD: Our technical support services on recycling related issues are in strong demand. Building on support we lent this year, our Waste to Wealth team expects to provide technical assistance to civic and environmental organizations, public officials, and small businesses in Knoxville, Tenn.; Centreville, Ill.; Dutchess County, N.Y.; Boulder, Colo.; Baltimore and Montgomery County, Md.; and Washington, D.C.

We are completing a history of our four decades of work showing how ILSR integrated local economic development into the waste, recycling, and environmental movements. The history of our efforts to change the rules and expectations of solid waste management from “burn and bury” to “reuse and recycling” are still instructive for debates in cities and counties today.

IMPACT STORY: In 2018, Alachua County (Gainesville, Fla.) opened a 37-acre industrial park for recycling, composting and reuse companies after implementing recommendations from ILSR’s Waste to Wealth team. It began when a citizens group reached out as part of a campaign to stop a planned garbage incinerator. After stopping the incinerator, a number of citizen anti-incineration activists won seats on the County Commission, which subsequently hired ILSR to provide technical plans for the Resource Recovery Industrial Park.

“In 2018, ILSR continued to help grow our recycling company and the jobs we create for hard to employ people in our community. Your help has been steady over the years and we appreciate it. Thanks for all the support we receive from ILSR!”

— Roosevelt Fair-Kincaid, president, Urban Corps Recycling Inc.

In the MEDIA

ILSR was cited in **1761** media stories in 2018.

ILSR had **42** prominent broadcast media hits in 2018.

ILSR's staff appeared in videos that were streamed more than **2 million** times in 2018.

ILSR published **29** commentaries in media outlets in 2018.

ILSR podcasts were streamed **45,000** times in 2018.

“Amazon will walk away from [the HQ2 bids] with a cache of incredibly valuable data,” said Stacy Mitchell of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. ‘Amazon will put this data to prodigious use in the coming years as it looks to expand its market power and sideline the competition.’”
— David Streitfeld, *The New York Times*

“The solution, according to ILSR’s Christopher Mitchell, is to stop whining on Reddit, get out of your chair, and begin taking action where giants like Comcast are weakest: locally.”
— Karl Bode, *Motherboard Vice*

“What storage does is really just amplify the ability of the customers to get most, or all, of their electricity from their own generation, which just gives them really an unprecedented amount of leverage in their relationship with the utility,’ [John] Farrell added.”
— Emma Foehringer Merchant, *GreenTech Media*

“More and more people are realizing the benefits of compost,’ [Brenda Platt] said, ‘and some states are even starting to require food scraps be separated. That’s driving new business and innovation.’”
— Britta Greene, *NPR’s Marketplace*

“As small businesses disappear, we’re losing these distinct market benefits,’ Stacy [Mitchell] concludes, ‘and something much more valuable, too: a diverse economy that keeps concentrated power in check and ensures that citizens and communities have the ability to chart their own course.’”
— *Washington Monthly*

“A study by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance found that the removal of 10,000 tons of solid waste creates six jobs versus as many as 36 if that waste were recycled instead.”
— Noreen O’Donnell, *NBC Los Angeles*

STAFF & BOARD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority
- Andy Reicher, Secretary/Treasurer
Urban Homesteading Assistance Board
- Gina Schaefer
A Few Cool Hardware Stores
- Neil Seldman
ILSR (co-founder)

STAFF

- John Bailey
Development Director
- Linda Bilsens
Project Manager, Composting for Community Initiative
- Jessica Del Fiacco
Communications Specialist
- Marie Donahue
Research Associate, Community-Scaled Economy & Energy Democracy Initiatives
- John Farrell
ILSR Co-Director & Director, Energy Democracy Initiative
- Zach Freed
Research Associate, Community-Scaled Economy Initiative
- Lisa Gonzalez
Senior Researcher, Community Broadband Networks Initiative
- Katie Kienbaum
Research Associate, Community Broadband Networks Initiative
- Linda Knapp
Senior Staff, Waste to Wealth Initiative
- Hibba Meraay
Communications Manager
- Christopher Mitchell
Director, Community Broadband Networks Initiative
- Stacy Mitchell
ILSR Co-Director & Director, Community-Scaled Economy Initiative
- David Morris
Distinguished Fellow
- Brenda Platt
Director, Composting for Community Initiative
- Neil Seldman
Director, Waste to Wealth Initiative
- Charlie Thaxton
Research Associate, Community-Scaled Economy Initiative
- Virginia Streefer
Research Associate, Composting for Community Initiative
- Olivia LaVecchia
Nick Stumo-Langer
Hannah Trostle
Karlee Weinmann

WE SEND OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION TO OUR AMAZING ILSR COLLEAGUES THAT LEFT THIS YEAR.

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

2018 INTERNS, FELLOWS, AND VOLUNTEERS

- Chloe Ashford • Christopher Barich • Hannah Bonestroo • Colton Fagundes
- Daniel Hanley • Kelsey Henquinet • Santa Krastina • Shiqiao Lyu
- Matthew Marcus • Maria McCoy • Hannah Rank • Sidi Traore

WE SEND APPRECIATION TO OUR ACCOUNTING TEAM

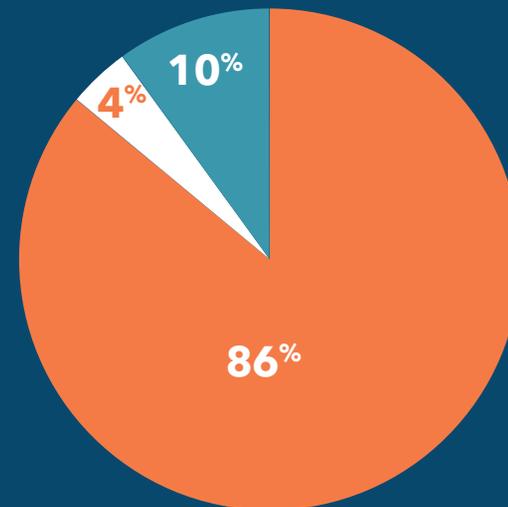
- Mary Cleary • Roni McKenna • Fiona Robinson

INCOME & EXPENSES

INCOME

Fiscal Year 2018
July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

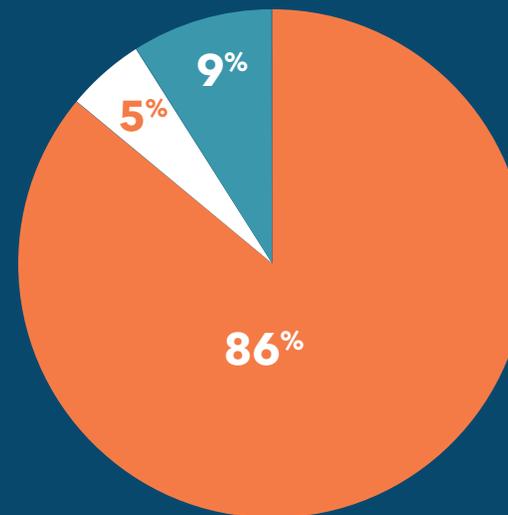
- Grants**
\$1,472,737
- Contracts, Honoraria, & Misc**
\$76,452
- Contributions**
\$169,126



EXPENSES

Fiscal Year 2018
July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

- Program**
\$1,277,887
- Fundraising**
\$75,781
- Management & General**
\$134,184



WE SEND OUR SINCERE THANKS TO THE INDIVIDUALS AND FOUNDATIONS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED OUR WORK OVER THE LAST 45 YEARS!

Please support ILSR by donating today!

ILSR.ORG/DONATE

"We consulted with dozens of outside groups, but no one was quoted, cited, and used as the inspiration for our policy agenda more than the work of ILSR. Their analysis clearly and repeatedly offers thoughtful alternatives to lawmakers that get to the real heart of economic policymaking in the 21st century."

— David Jonas, Policy Director,
Tom Perriello for Governor campaign in Virginia



▲ ILSR's Brenda Platt conducting a composting training session with youth from the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute in Secaucus, NJ.

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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**INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance**

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