



I'M A REPORTER  
FOR THE INQUIRER  
WANT TO TALK?  
call/text: [redacted]

# THE LENFEST INSTITUTE

## 2020 Impact Report

January, 2021

Dear Friends,

We are grateful for your support of The Lenfest Institute for Journalism.

I hope you will agree that our work has never been more important. Last year, during a once-in-a-century pandemic, the largest mass protest movement in a generation, and a critical election, the need for fact-based, independent news — and the challenges facing local journalism — grew dramatically. Both The Lenfest Institute and our region's local journalists had to pivot quickly to meet the moment.

As the pandemic took hold in March, The Lenfest Institute partnered with **Independence Public Media Foundation**, **The Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund**, and the **Knight Foundation** to establish the **Philadelphia COVID-19 Community Information Fund**, which provided \$2.5 million to 19 Philadelphia-area news and civic information organizations. We worked with the **Facebook Journalism Project** to distribute more than \$12 million in Facebook emergency funding to 500 news outlets across the country.

Throughout 2020, the Institute has supported sustainable local news in Philadelphia and nationwide. Our support for the transformation of The Philadelphia Inquirer, which is owned by The Lenfest Institute, will total more than \$7 million in 2020, including major investments in investigative news, health journalism, elections coverage, digital product development, and diversity throughout the news enterprise. These investments have helped The Inquirer serve the people of Philadelphia with high-quality news at a time of unprecedented assault on the free press in America, and would not have been possible without the generous contributions of our donors.

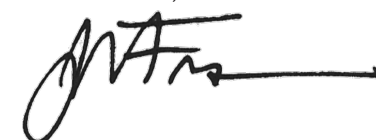
The Lenfest Institute has also worked to build leadership, diversity, and fundraising capacity throughout the field of local news. We created the **Lenfest News Philanthropy Network**, providing training and advice to more than 500 fundraising professionals at news organizations around the world. We convened the three-day **BEYOND Summit**, Philadelphia's largest and most inclusive gathering of diverse journalists and news executives. We launched the **Lenfest Constellation News Leadership Initiative** providing management development for 21 local Philadelphia media professionals and mentors in Philadelphia. **The Lenfest Local Lab**, the Institute's incubator for new news products and innovation, has launched the first in a collection of Philadelphia neighborhood digital newsletters with funding from the **Google News Initiative**.

In 2020, we widened our programming aperture to better support local news in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as the City of Philadelphia. We expanded **Spotlight PA**, the Harrisburg-based statewide investigative news organization by merging with **PA Post**, another leading statehouse newsroom. Spotlight PA now distributes public-service news content to nearly 60 news outlets across the state. Just over a year old, Spotlight PA is the largest statewide investigative news organization in Pennsylvania.

We are thankful this year for the support of thousands of new donors to The Lenfest Institute. We are deeply grateful for the work of local journalists who helped bravely protect the freedoms we all hold dear. We thank every reporter, photographer, and videographer who risked their personal safety, their health, and their freedoms to cover a contentious election, violence in the streets, or COVID-19.

This annual report describes how your support has helped enable journalists' work as essential frontline workers in ensuring the strength of our democracy. Thank you for your partnership and support during a year of exceptional challenge and impact. We look forward to our continued work together.

With thanks,



Jim Friedlich  
Executive Director & CEO  
The Lenfest Institute for Journalism



Photo by Wendy Ruderman

## A momentous year for local news

While many of us have been able to work at home throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Philadelphia Inquirer journalists have been out in the community reporting essential news to keep us safe and informed. On the cover, reporter Ellie Silverman reports from Philadelphia's first COVID-19 testing site in March. Silverman created a poster with her name and phone number to safely interview people in their cars while they waited to get tested. (Photo by Tim Tai/Philadelphia Inquirer)

Photojournalist Jessica Griffin (above) and reporter Wendy Ruderman accompanied local paramedics as they treated COVID-19 patients. The paramedics continuously responded to high-risk calls and kept treating patients, despite the risks. "This makes me nauseous. I'm scared for them. I can see the stress in their face," the volunteer chief of the organization said.

On Page 3, Inquirer photojournalist Tyger Williams, a Lenfest Fellow, photographed thousands of protesters gathered in front of the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to protest racial injustice after the killing of George Floyd.

Last spring, The Blue Angels and Thunderbirds flew over Philadelphia as a salute to frontline workers. On the back cover, photojournalist Heather Khalifa, a former Lenfest Fellow, captured them flying over the Art Museum.

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Our thanks to Harriet and Larry Weiss, and their Better World Fund, for generously supporting the printing of the 2020 Impact Report.



# High-Impact Journalism

The Lenfest Institute supports reporting that elevates community voices and exposes injustice.

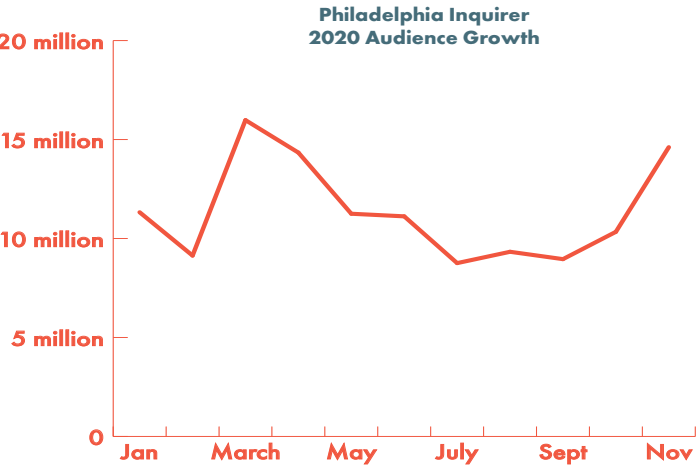




# Justice for all requires stories of all

The Lenfest Institute’s core mission is to enable fact-based, independent journalism that makes a difference in people’s lives. Never has that been more important than in 2020.

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* has been there every step of the way for its community, devoting unprecedented resources to cover the major stories of the year. Last fall, more than a dozen Inquirer journalists fanned out to every corner of Pennsylvania to provide on-the-ground coverage of the critical battleground state until all the ballots were counted.

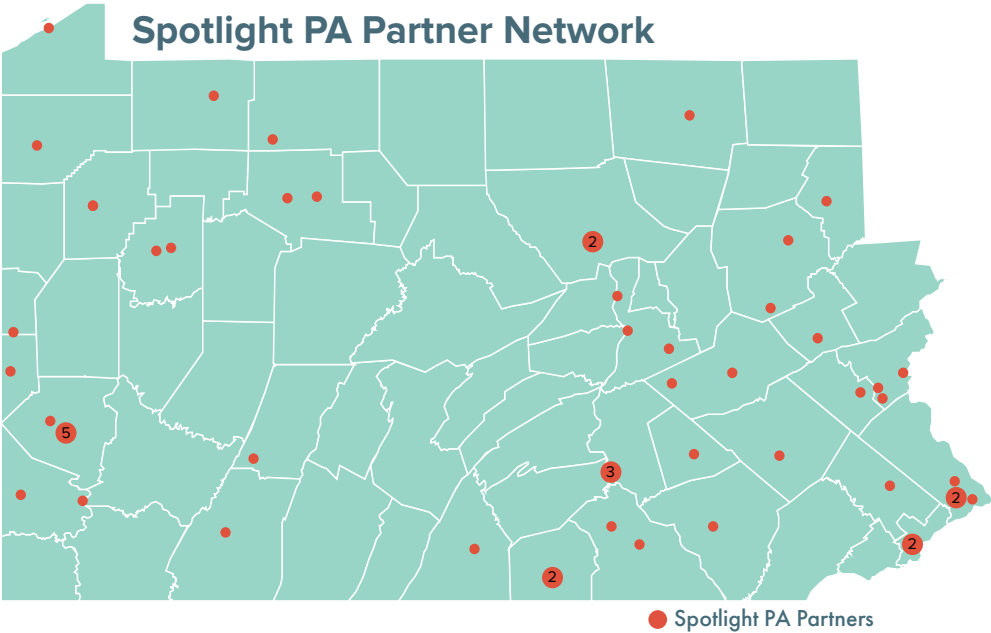


In March, as the pandemic first gripped our community, The Inquirer tracked every aspect of the virus, the healthcare system, and the shutdowns. The Inquirer is now reporting on efforts for recovery from the pandemic with *The Future of Work*, a year-long reporting initiative funded by **William Penn Foundation** and focused on workforce and job development in Philadelphia, the poorest big city in the country.

The Philadelphia community has responded to this reporting. With a 36% increase in web audience,

more people than ever read The Inquirer in 2020. The Inquirer has continued to make its critical reporting accessible to new communities via its website, mobile app, social media, and in print.

*Spotlight PA*, the Harrisburg newsroom launched by The Lenfest Institute and The Philadelphia Inquirer, is the most ambitious and effective collaborative journalism project in Pennsylvania. The digital-first newsroom produces accountability reporting about state government and urgent state-wide issues for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians. This year, Spotlight PA merged with *PA Post*, and partnered with nearly 60 media outlets across the state, providing them with free access to high-quality accountability news reporting.



The Institute is committed to serving all communities in Philadelphia. In partnership with **Independence Public Media Foundation**, **The Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund**, and the **Knight Foundation**, we established the **Philadelphia COVID-19 Community Information Fund**. This fund supports 19 local media organizations as they work to meet the information needs of Philadelphia’s most vulnerable communities at this time of acute need, with an eye toward how the pandemic provided an opportunity for reinvention and reimagination. Among the projects: **AI for the People**, in partnership with **Little Giant Creative**, developed Twitter campaigns to reduce online engagement with disinformation targeted at Black Philadelphians related to the election and the pandemic. Other grantees such as **WURD Radio** and **The Plug** have partnered to provide in-depth coverage of how Philadelphia's Black and Latinx communities are experiencing and navigating the innovation economy.

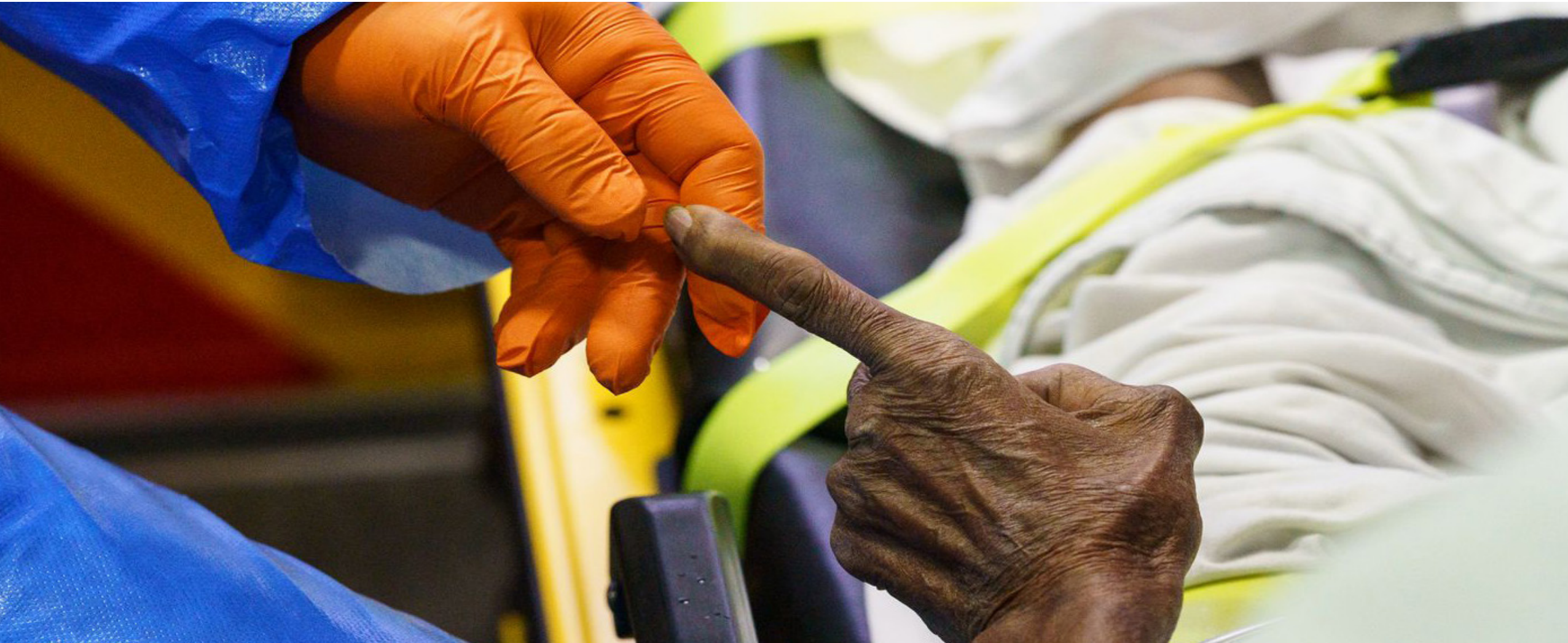
Nationwide, the Institute partnered with the **Facebook Journalism Project** and the **Local Media Association** to award more than 500 Facebook-funded emergency grants to outlets across the United States to enable them to mobilize for coronavirus coverage.

As the number of COVID-19 cases in Philadelphia surged last spring, Philadelphia Inquirer journalists donned PPE and reported on the stories of those leading the effort to combat the virus.

Inquirer journalists Lisa Gartner, Lauren Schneiderman, and Tim Tai embedded with healthcare workers inside the city’s busiest COVID-19 hospital. Their exclusive reporting — shared through words, photos, and video — helped Inquirer readers experience what it was like on the frontlines of the battle against the virus. “It was like you were in a field hospital in a war, and there’s people all around you that have tested positive for COVID-19,” Gartner said.

Journalists Wendy Ruderman and Jessica Griffin shadowed paramedics who risked their own lives to save nursing home residents with slim odds.

At left, Griffin photographed a paramedic treating a patient in the back of an ambulance outside Rosemont Care & Rehabilitation Center in Bryn Mawr on April 21.





# Diverse, growing audiences

To gain the readership, trust, and support of their communities, local news media must produce essential journalism that represents the needs, voices, and concerns of all residents. The Institute has created programs to build greater equity and diversity within The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia news landscape to best represent the city's diverse communities. These steps are essential for creating sustainable, community-supported news outlets.

Through the *Lenfest Fellows Program*, the Institute has supported 10 full-time two-year fellowships for emerging journalists of color in The Inquirer newsroom. More than 500 Inquirer employees from across the company have gone through diversity, equity, and inclusion training from *The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education*.

While there is much more work to do, these programs and other financial support for diverse hiring are important steps to ensure more representative news coverage. Across the Philadelphia news landscape, Institute programs like the *Constellation News Leadership Initiative* and the *Lenfest Next Generation Awards* have supported journalists of color with career and leadership development training, mentorship opportunities, and stipends to attend professional conferences.

The *Inquirer Community News Service* supports a growing series of community listening and engagement efforts that leverage the resources and reach of The Inquirer, the largest news organization in the Philadelphia region, to bring reporting to underrepresented communities and to share the voices of communities across the region.

The Community News Service expanded *Curious Philly*, The Inquirer's listening platform that enables



community members to have their questions answered by Inquirer reporters. In addition, The Inquirer used a text message-based news service that allows readers to submit questions and share tips directly to the newsroom.

The Inquirer also expanded *El Inquirer*, its Spanish-language coverage. El Inquirer both translates stories into Spanish and publishes original Spanish-language journalism. Reporter Jesenia De Moya Correa, a former Lenfest Fellow, has covered topics such as the diverse, growing Latino electorate in Philadelphia, how community members in North Philadelphia are fighting to save vacant lots they've converted into gardens, and how South Philly restaurant owners are donating food to meet the needs of community members amidst the pandemic.

These stories are published both in The Inquirer and as part of *Resolve Philadelphia's Broke in Philly collaboration*. The added funding allowed El Inquirer

to continue this work and integrate text messaging tools to connect with and serve the community.

*"From the Front Lines"* is an ongoing Inquirer series featuring first-person narratives from healthcare workers and other essential employees who are working during the pandemic. The Inquirer expanded the series to include the voices of the most vulnerable, the most hard-hit, and the most diverse representation of Philadelphians in both crisis and in healing.

## The Lenfest Fellows at Work

*In the wake of the 2020 presidential election, protesters took to the streets of Philadelphia to demand that all votes be counted. Former Lenfest Fellow Heather Khalifa captured protesters marching down Market Street toward Philadelphia City Hall (left).*

*Lenfest Fellow Damichael Cole told the story of Shar'ron Baker, Philadelphia's first female boxing coach, who has been training*



The Inquirer also centered community voices in its election coverage. The Inquirer's *2020 Election Roundtable* regularly convened a diverse group of Pennsylvanians who shared their opinions and insights, while contributing to The Inquirer's reporting on the race for the White House.

"The one thing that this panel has taught me, communication and conversation is necessary, even if you vehemently oppose the ideological positions of some of these people," one participant said.

*fighters since 1991, with photos (above, top) by Khalifa. "Early on, when guys came into the gym, they just see a girl and say, 'I ain't going to let no girl train me,'" Baker said. "Then when they saw my work, they gravitated to me."*

*Lenfest Fellow Tyger Williams photographed Kerry Anne and Michael Gordon (above, bottom), who showed their support for Black Lives Matters protesters on their wedding day in June.*



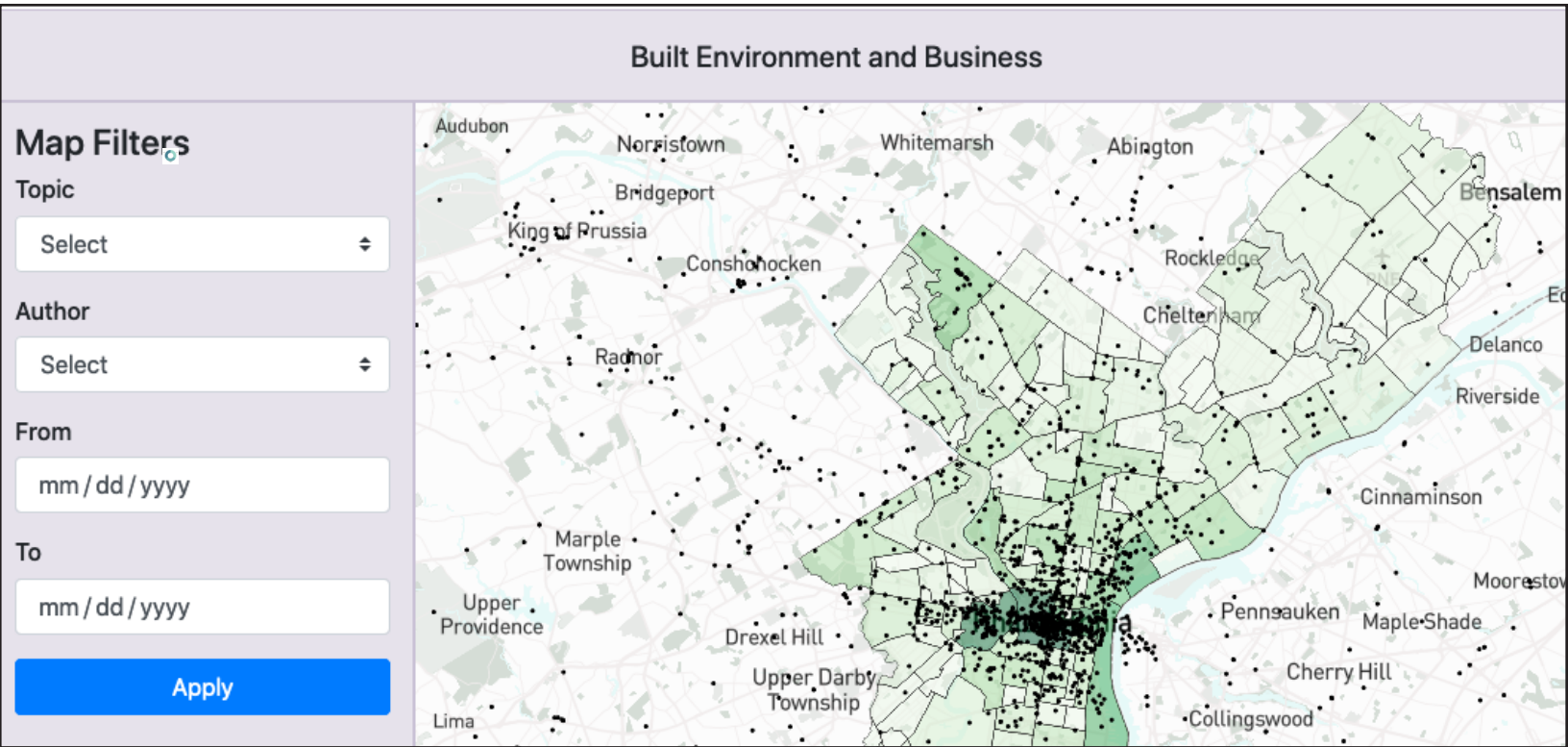
# News Technology & Innovation

The Institute is working with local news outlets to apply cutting-edge technology to create seamless product experiences for news consumers. Together with its partners, the Institute also supports publishers as they optimize new revenue streams such as digital subscriptions, membership, and philanthropy to help transform and financially sustain local news enterprises.

*The Lenfest Local Lab*, the Institute’s experimental product development team, is partnering with *Columbia University’s Brown Institute* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* to develop a suite of machine learning tools that empower local newsrooms to make data-informed assessments of their content. These tools strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices in local news coverage. The tools will help newsrooms survey broad sets of content including language, imagery, locations mentioned, and news sources used in coverage to help ensure diverse and equitable representation in local journalism. They will allow newsrooms to continuously monitor coverage and accelerate change. The tools will also support strategic planning and business modeling for more representative and equitable news organizations. The project is supported by the *Google News Initiative*.

As COVID-19 cases rose last summer, the Lenfest Lab utilized this technology to organize Inquirer coverage of the pandemic by county, so readers across New Jersey and Pennsylvania could easily find the most up-to-date information about their local areas.

In August, the Lab and The Inquirer also launched the first in a series of hyperlocal digital newsletters. They are experimenting with smart ways to scale reporting through elements of news curation, automation, collaboration, and monetization at a neighborhood level. This project is also supported by the Google News Initiative.



The map above shows an initial story location audit of a year’s worth of The Inquirer’s built environment coverage across the Philadelphia region. The Lenfest Lab’s open-source suite of machine learning tools allow newsrooms to understand how communities are portrayed. The tools help examine how editorial decisions manifest themselves in language, locations covered, and story placement. These tools shed light on disparities in coverage measured relative to demographic benchmarks, and offer insights into promising product opportunities.



*The Institute provides thought leadership, funding, and critical tools to accelerate new sources of revenue and leadership development in news organizations across the country. It has:*

- Launched the *Lenfest News Philanthropy Network* to build fundraising skills for local news organizations. More than 500 people have registered for Network programming since its launch in early 2020.
- Helped lead the *Facebook Local News Accelerators* to develop and enhance digital subscription acquisition, retention, and membership strategies in newsrooms across the country.
- Expanded *Knight-Lenfest Table Stakes*, the industry’s premier, nationwide training for digital news transformation.
- Partnered with leading researchers, such as NYU’s *Membership Puzzle Project*, to create industry-wide guides to business model solutions.

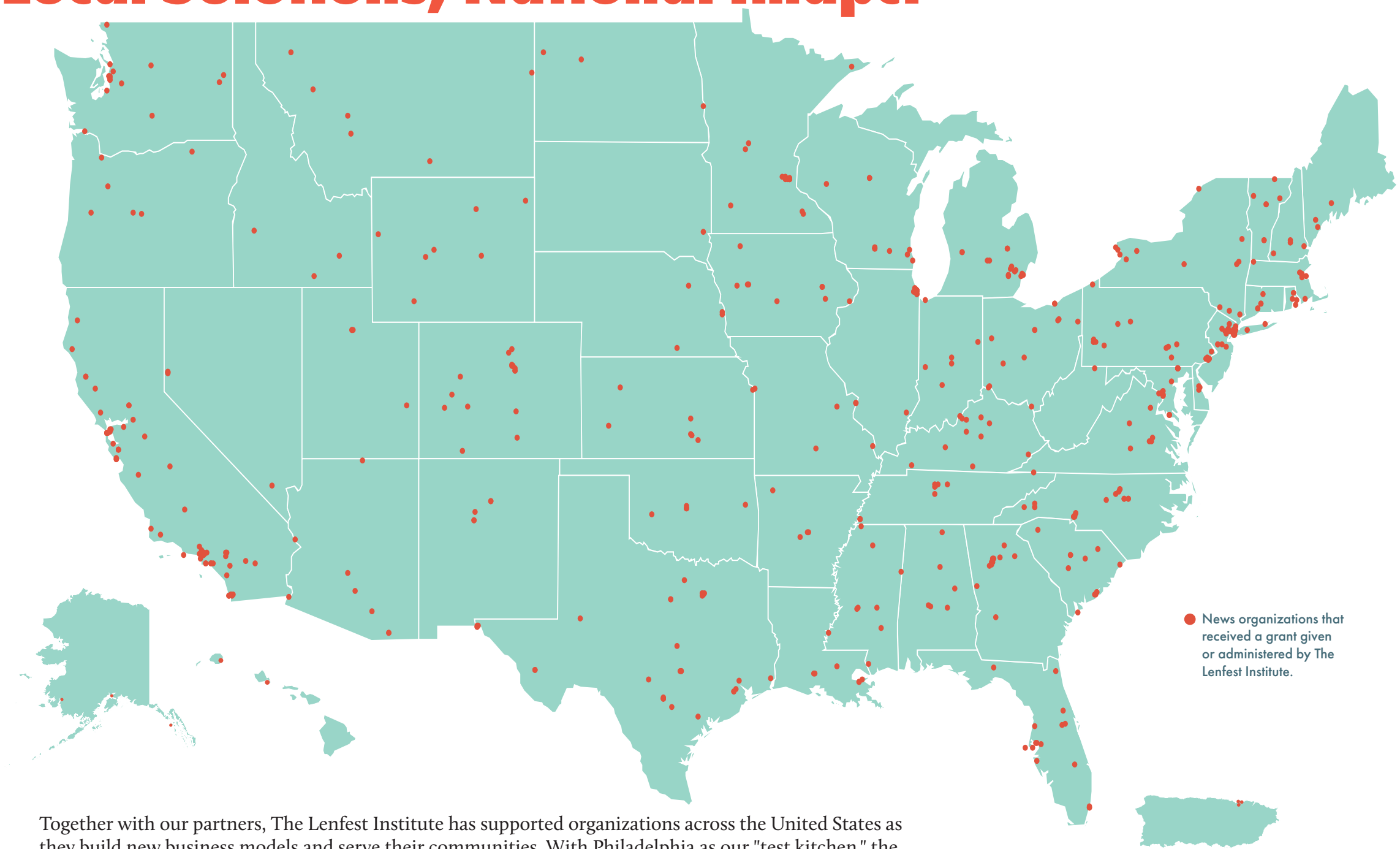
With funding from *The Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund*, the *Institute*, and the *Knight Foundation*, The Inquirer has grown its product and technology teams to better equip it to create digital products that will engage younger, more diverse, and growing audiences. The Inquirer now has one of the largest technology teams of any local news organization in the country. Since 2019, it has added 20 new staff members as engineers, product designers, product managers, scrum masters, and more.

Also in partnership with *Google*, The Lenfest Institute has developed *NewsPack*, a new technology platform to enable next-generation news startups to build their websites and back-end systems more quickly and efficiently. The effort is designed to address some of the persistent obstacles to creating economically sustainable models for local journalism.



The Inquirer has filled 20 new digital technology roles since 2019.

# Local Solutions, National Impact



● News organizations that received a grant given or administered by The Lenfest Institute.

Together with our partners, The Lenfest Institute has supported organizations across the United States as they build new business models and serve their communities. With Philadelphia as our "test kitchen," the Institute has shared what we've learned here at home and made a difference nationwide.

In 2020, the Institute supported more than 500 organizations in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. ***The Community Listening and Engagement Fund COVID-19 Response Fund***, funded by ***Democracy Fund***, ***Knight Foundation***, the ***News Integrity Initiative***, and the ***Institute*** awarded grants to help newsrooms create coverage that addressed community information needs. Grants administered in partnership with ***Facebook Journalism Project*** programs assisted with immediate COVID-19-related needs while also helping publishers transition to digital-first business models. ***Knight-Lenfest Table Stakes***, administered by ***The American Press Institute*** and funded by ***The Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund***, is the leading change management training program for local news organizations in America. And the ***From The Source: Stories of the Delaware River Watershed*** project is an innovative collaboration with ***The National Geographic Society*** and ***William Penn Foundation*** to develop a network of newsrooms reporting on the Delaware and Ohio watersheds.

## The Lenfest Institute: A key partner for journalism's major funders

While The Lenfest Institute has a deep and lasting commitment to local news in the Philadelphia-region, we have emerged as a sought-after partner for America's leading journalism funders.

By providing administrative support, maintaining a broad network of relationships, and publicizing and sharing learnings and best practices from grant programs, The Lenfest Institute has built a unique model that enables us to expand our reach and impact across the country.

The Lenfest Institute is grateful to our national partners, who have supported leading grant programs, cutting-edge training workshops, and key initiatives to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. They include: Democracy Fund, Facebook Journalism Project, Google News Initiative, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Membership Puzzle Project, National Geographic Society, Newmark School of Journalism at the City University of New York, Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press, and Texas Tribune's RevLab.





# 2020 Fundraising Results

Philanthropy is a pillar of sustainable local journalism, and with thanks to the support and trust of our generous donors, The Lenfest Institute is helping to set a national precedent for the future of local news.

2020 was a record year for the Institute. Thanks to more than 5,100 individual contributions, we raised \$3.8 million to support essential public-service journalism at The Philadelphia Inquirer, Spotlight PA, and our other partners. Local journalism spotlighted the challenges facing the city’s arts, education, sports, and food scene. As the COVID-19 lock-down took hold last spring, local government officially declared journalists “essential workers.”

Fact-based local journalism is critical to our community and to our democracy, and we all must do what we can to protect it.

We could not do this work without our donors, and we’re grateful for your support.



Totals accurate as of Dec. 18, 2020

## Behind the story: 'Besieged, then betrayed'

On May 31, unrest in Philadelphia over the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police had come to the historic Black-owned business corridor on 52nd Street in West Philadelphia.

A team of nearly a dozen Philadelphia Inquirer journalists reconstructed the events — drawing on interviews with dozens of neighbors, police, and city officials, videos posted to social media, TV footage, police radio calls, and incident reports. Their reporting, published in July as a special report, “Besieged, then betrayed,” exposed that what happened along 52nd Street was the result of failures both at the command level and by individual officers. At left, photojournalist Jessica Griffin captured a man talking with police at 52nd and Chestnut streets.

The Inquirer’s investigative reporting is supported in part by The Lenfest Institute’s High-Impact Journalism Fund. Editorial coverage is reported independently of the fund’s donors. You can learn more about the Institute’s support of high-impact journalism at [lenfestinstitute.org](https://lenfestinstitute.org).



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**“Where better than  
*Philadelphia* to invent the  
future of a free press?”**

**- H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest**





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