



**THE  
LENFEST  
INSTITUTE**

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**2021 Impact Report**



Dear Friends,

2021 has been another challenging year, but local journalists continued to serve our communities tirelessly with essential public-service reporting and vital factual information.

At The Lenfest Institute, our mission remains to provide practical, actionable solutions for local news through support of journalists, news organizations, and new business models — here at home in Philadelphia, throughout the United States, and selectively around the world.

As the parent organization of The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Lenfest Institute and its funders continued to support The Inquirer's investigative news team, the largest of its kind in the region. We were proud to support reporting projects such as Future of Work, a yearlong project on how the COVID-19 pandemic is changing the nature of employment in our region, in partnership with the William Penn Foundation.

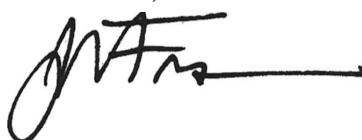
The Institute has also continued to engage news leaders throughout the Philadelphia region through programs such as the Lenfest Constellation News Leadership Initiative, which provides training and coaching to mid-career media executives of color.

Our local news focus continued to encompass all of Pennsylvania through Spotlight PA, the award-winning Harrisburg-based newsroom that provides its reporting free-of-charge to more than 80 other newspapers, public radio stations, and websites throughout the commonwealth.

Nationally, we've focused on advising others on fundraising for local news and replicating The Lenfest Institute model for local news ownership. We've consulted with leaders in Chicago, Baltimore, and beyond on major newspaper acquisitions or digital news site launches, and we are eager to help others engage in the critical work of preserving and advancing strong local news in their communities.

This annual report details how your support made this work possible. We're grateful for your partnership, and we look forward to our continued work together in 2022 and beyond.

With thanks,



Jim Friedlich  
Executive Director & CEO  
[The Lenfest Institute for Journalism](#)



**Above:** Future of Work, a yearlong reporting series on Philadelphia's evolving economy, which was supported by The Lenfest Institute and the William Penn Foundation. In this photo, which was part of the series, HVAC instructor Lou Abruzzese teaches his class about hydronics at Orleans Technical College in Northeast Philadelphia. This photo appeared alongside a Philadelphia Inquirer story sharing resources on how to pursue new careers in growing businesses. Photo by Tyger Williams/Philadelphia Inquirer.

**On the front cover:** Photo of the Philadelphia skyline by Tom Gralish/Philadelphia Inquirer.

**On the back cover:** "Turntable" by Amanda Schachter and Alexander Levi, at SLO Architecture along the Delaware River waterfront. The sculpture is made from disposable face masks, and harvests wind energy. Photo by Tom Gralish/Philadelphia Inquirer.

# Local News. For *Philadelphia*. For *Pennsylvania*. For *America*.



Providing quality, independent, fact-based news and information is essential to healthy, just, vibrant, and democratic communities. The Lenfest Institute for Journalism supports local journalism through its focus on diversified revenue models, digital product development, and news equity and representation.

The Lenfest Institute provides grant funding, runs training programs, and synthesizes best practices to develop and disseminate sustainable solutions to the business challenges facing local news providers.

As the steward of The Philadelphia Inquirer and Spotlight PA, the Institute is blazing a unique path by serving legacy publishers and digital start-ups as they fill community news gaps and serve new and underrepresented audiences.

In the Philadelphia area, this means championing and facilitating a collaborative news and information ecosystem that builds on valuable history while also fostering entrepreneurial vision and innovation. Diversity and representation are critical components of positive business outcomes. The Institute is working to define different pathways to sustainability for publishers while also ensuring a diversity of representative voices and leadership in both legacy and independent media.

Nationally, the Institute leverages its expertise and resources to facilitate capacity building for local news publishers through training programs and grantmaking that support the implementation of business model best practices.



Charles Fox/Philadelphia Inquirer

## Re-imagining The Inquirer for the future of *Philadelphia*

Philadelphia serves as a model for news, information, and media ecosystems around the country. The city's news organizations of record must effectively partner with community-based news and information organizations to meet the needs of broad and diverse audiences in the region.

The Lenfest Institute's goal is to serve as that anchor organization for Philadelphia's news community. The Institute believes that to successfully fulfill this role, legacy news organizations like The Philadelphia Inquirer must equitably meet the news

and information needs of diverse communities by being a strong partner and supporter of collaborative journalism. As a result, The Inquirer is creating the Communities & Engagement Desk to elevate community voices.

With the Institute's support, The Inquirer continues to develop and incorporate new technology and digital products to better reach audiences. It has also focused on creating new community-focused news coverage that uplifts the voices of those traditionally overlooked by journalists.

### Supporting the ongoing growth of The Philadelphia Inquirer

In 2021, The Lenfest Institute awarded \$6 million in grants to support the ongoing transformation of The Philadelphia Inquirer. As The Inquirer's non-controlling parent organization, the Institute primarily supports The Inquirer through targeted grantmaking focused on digital transformation; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and high-impact journalism. Some highlights from 2021 include:

- As COVID-19 vaccines became widely available early in the year, The Inquirer provided regular updates about where residents could find shots once they were eligible and how to remain safe as the Delta and Omicron variants spread.

The Inquirer's Service Desk and the Lenfest Local Lab @ The Inquirer created a bilingual transportation guide to help Philadelphians get to the city's mass vaccination clinics. They also experimented with SMS text message alerts about a vaccine clinic in North Philadelphia.

- Philadelphia surpassed its record of 500 homicides in 2021 as gun violence disproportionately affected a handful of Philadelphia neighborhoods. Through its Under Fire reporting series, Inquirer reporters and photographers followed the families of those impacted by the violence and the survivors who are trying to rebuild their lives and gain some semblance of peace and security.

As part of the series, The Inquirer showed how gun violence leaves behind a breathtaking level of fear and trauma among key components of the city's residents.

- The Lenfest Institute awarded \$1.3 million in new grants to The Inquirer to support initiatives that will enhance coverage of Philadelphia's most pressing issues, with a particular focus on investigative news serving communities that have been historically underserved or misrepresented by journalism in the region.

These grants, in part, are being used to launch a Communities & Engagement Desk at The Inquirer. The desk will focus on amplifying diverse voices and strengthening relationships with communities throughout the Philadelphia area.

- Researchers from Temple University's Klein College of Media and Communication conducted an independent audit of The Inquirer's news coverage. The study provided a comprehensive, quantitative, and qualitative look at The Inquirer's representation of different races, genders, and geographies in its news coverage and its news team. The content audit is informing The Inquirer's continued work to ensure that its coverage is more representative.

- The Institute supported The Inquirer's ongoing technological transformation. The Inquirer now has more than 60,000 digital subscribers. Thanks to Institute funding, The Inquirer was able to upgrade its back-end systems to improve its digital subscription marketing, billing, and retention strategies to better serve readers and develop strategies that are critical to its future.



## Diverse leadership for a diverse Philadelphia

Thanks in part to Lenfest Institute support, Philadelphia serves as a model for news, information, and media ecosystems around the United States.

The Institute has established partnerships between both legacy and start-up organizations to better serve all communities. Through direct investment and programming, we continue to expand our commitment to community media, news

media start-ups, and training and professional development for a broad and diverse array of Philadelphia regional news media.

The Institute is proud of the progress we made along with our partners in 2021. The Institute is taking a long view of this work, recognizing that it will take time, collective effort, continued investment, and collaboration to make meaningful change.

The 2021-22 Constellation News Leadership Fellows (clockwise from top left): David Auguste (6abc), Lisa Bryant (Generocity), Kerith Gabriel (The Philadelphia Inquirer), Angelica Irizarry (The Philadelphia Inquirer), Nia King (WHYY), Ariel Miller (6abc), Ezequiel Minaya (The Philadelphia Inquirer), Melissa Simpson (Next City), Kristal Sotomayor (¡Presente! Media), and Jillian Wilson (The Philadelphia Inquirer).

### Ensuring all Philadelphians have the news they need

In 2021, The Lenfest Institute and its partners continued past programming efforts that have shown promise and introduced new initiatives that will support the Philadelphia journalism community through programming and investments in individuals, organizations, and the overall ecosystem. They included:

- The Constellation News Leadership Initiative, a comprehensive management development program providing career coaching and executive leadership resources to mid-career Philadelphia-area media professionals of color pursuing senior roles in local news media. Over the seven-month program, the Initiative's Fellows receive world-class training from three sources: executive coursework from the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, mentorship from a group of senior Executive Advisors who have advanced to positions of leadership in Philadelphia news enterprises, and career coaching from Crawford Leadership Strategies, a Black-owned leadership development firm. By the end of the 2020-2021 fellowship, 40% of Fellows reported a job promotion during the program and 90% reported an expansion of job responsibilities. Additionally, 70% of the Fellows said the program helped raise their profile in the industry, while 90% said they made new connections with fellow journalists and media professionals. Every Fellow said the fellowship increased their confidence at work.
- The Lenfest Next Generation Fund supports Philadelphia-area journalists and students of color with their professional development. In 2021, the fund had two tracks: The Next Generation Award Fund provided stipends toward a professional development opportunity, and the Internship Support Track allowed applicants to apply for funding to support otherwise unpaid internships.
- The Lenfest Institute supported the launch of The Al Día Foundation and its Felix Varela Fellowship Program with a \$150,000 grant. The new nonprofit was created to spark innovation and entrepreneurship in Philadelphia's journalism community and will help ensure that all Philadelphians are served with news and information that helps them lead meaningful lives.
- The Community Voices Fund, a collaboration between the Knight-Lenfest Local News Transformation Fund, the Independence Public Media Foundation, and the HealthSpark Foundation awarded \$2.3 million in grants to 47 organizations. The Community Voices Fund focused on supporting community media-makers, journalists, and other organizations who are creating community-centered news and information. The partners prioritized voices and leaders from communities traditionally underrepresented in philanthropy, with a special emphasis on LGBTQ+, AAPI, and Indigenous communities.



Photos by Heather Khalifa and Jessica Griffin/Philadelphia Inquirer



## “I hoped I wouldn’t get trampled.”

On Jan. 6, 2021, Inquirer photojournalists Heather Khalifa and Jessica Griffin traveled to Washington, D.C. to cover what they thought would be a major protest as Congress voted to certify the results of the 2020 presidential election. Instead, they witnessed a historic and extreme moment: the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. “With each area that they breached, in the back of my mind, I kept thinking they’d get stopped — but they didn’t get stopped,” Griffin said.

After a year of covering protests in Philadelphia, Griffin and Khalifa were used to covering mass demonstrations, but this was different. “People were packed like sardines on the infrastructure that was built for the inauguration. And that, to me, was just a really dangerous, claustrophobic mess,” Khalifa said.



# Collaborative journalism for Pennsylvania

Spotlight PA, the Harrisburg newsroom launched by The Lenfest Institute and The Philadelphia Inquirer, continues to create high-quality investigative and accountability reporting for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

Spotlight PA partners with more than 80 Pennsylvania media outlets to distribute its accountability reporting about state government, policymaking, and other urgent state-wide issues. Spotlight PA's journalism reaches more than 35 million readers monthly in Pennsylvania and beyond.

After just two years, Spotlight PA is the largest and most effective statewide news collaborative in Pennsylvania, and it is setting a national example.

A Spotlight PA investigation showed that the Wolf administration's failure to clarify rules around addiction treatment and medical marijuana had far-reaching and serious consequences.

After her son's overdose death, Susan Ousterman spent months reaching out to the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs with concerns over confusion about the marijuana rules. Ousterman took her questions directly to the department's secretary.

for the future of news. Spotlight PA is supported by thousands of individual Pennsylvanians as well as statewide and national funders.

In only its second full year of operations, the newsroom won two national awards for investigative journalism, the Al Neuharth Innovation in Investigative Journalism Award from the Online News Association and the Best Investigative Journalism Prize from the Institute for Nonprofit News, which recognizes excellence by independent and nonprofit newsrooms.

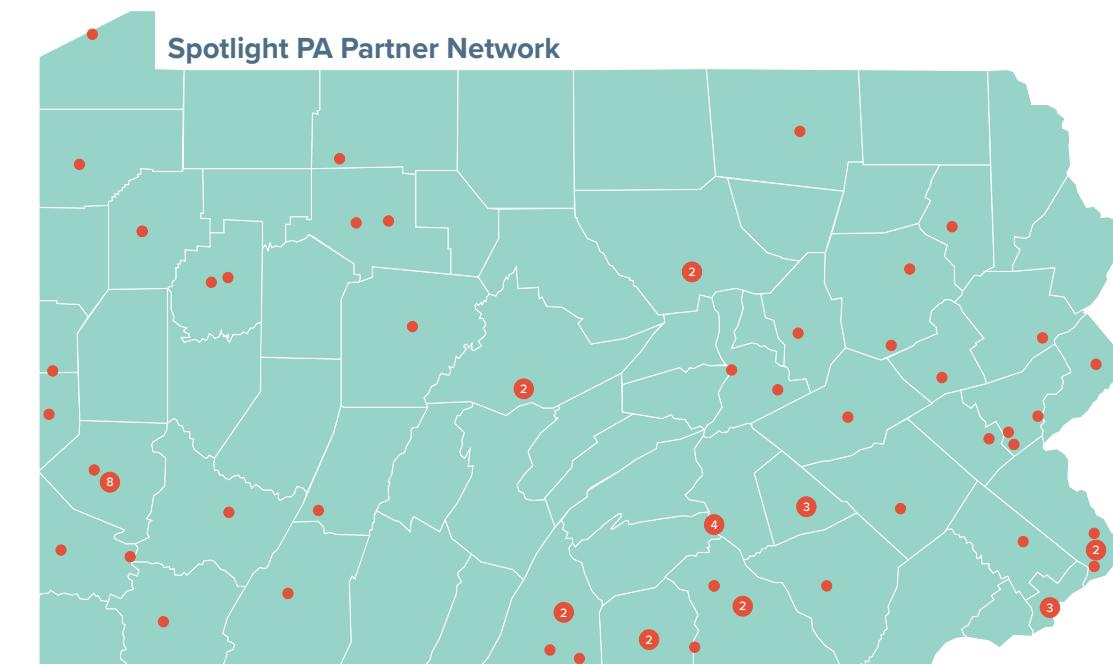
Spotlight PA also won 11 statewide awards from The Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association and the state chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists.

## Spotlight PA is creating journalism to serve all Pennsylvanians

Spotlight PA's journalism has had consistent impact throughout the year across the commonwealth. It expanded its civic engagement events portfolio to better connect Pennsylvanians to their government and state-level topics.

Together with their partners, Spotlight PA's journalists covered the following stories:

- Spotlight PA uncovered that, for a decade, Pennsylvania's Department of Labor overcharged unemployed Pennsylvanians millions of dollars — prompting the state to admit the error and issue refunds to nearly 110,000 people.
- In direct response to a Spotlight PA investigation, the Pennsylvania state police said it resumed collecting racial data during traffic stops. It had previously ceased collecting the data, which is considered critical to detecting possible racial profiling.
- The newsroom frequently collaborated directly with local and national publications in 2021, strengthening its work and boosting its reach. For example, Spotlight PA partnered with NBC News on an investigation into the State Police shooting of Christian Hall, a Chinese American teenager in the Poconos. Spotlight PA obtained unredacted video for the first time — showing the teen had his hands up when fatally shot — which has prompted a new wave of attention on the case. The story was picked up by The Washington Post and USA Today, and the Monroe County NAACP has called for an independent investigation.





## Sustainable solutions for America...

The Lenfest Institute calls Philadelphia home, but alongside our partners, we support organizations across the United States to help them build sustainable business models and serve their communities with reliable journalism. The Institute shares what is learned in Philadelphia nationwide to expand upon our impact.

The Lenfest Institute model is now being replicated and adapted nationwide — especially in cities that have seen their local news organizations taken over by hedge funds more interested in extracting profits than providing quality news and information.

The Institute provided strategic advice, counsel, and guidance to Chicago Public Media, which announced plans to acquire The Chicago Sun-Times, placing the storied local newspaper under nonprofit ownership,

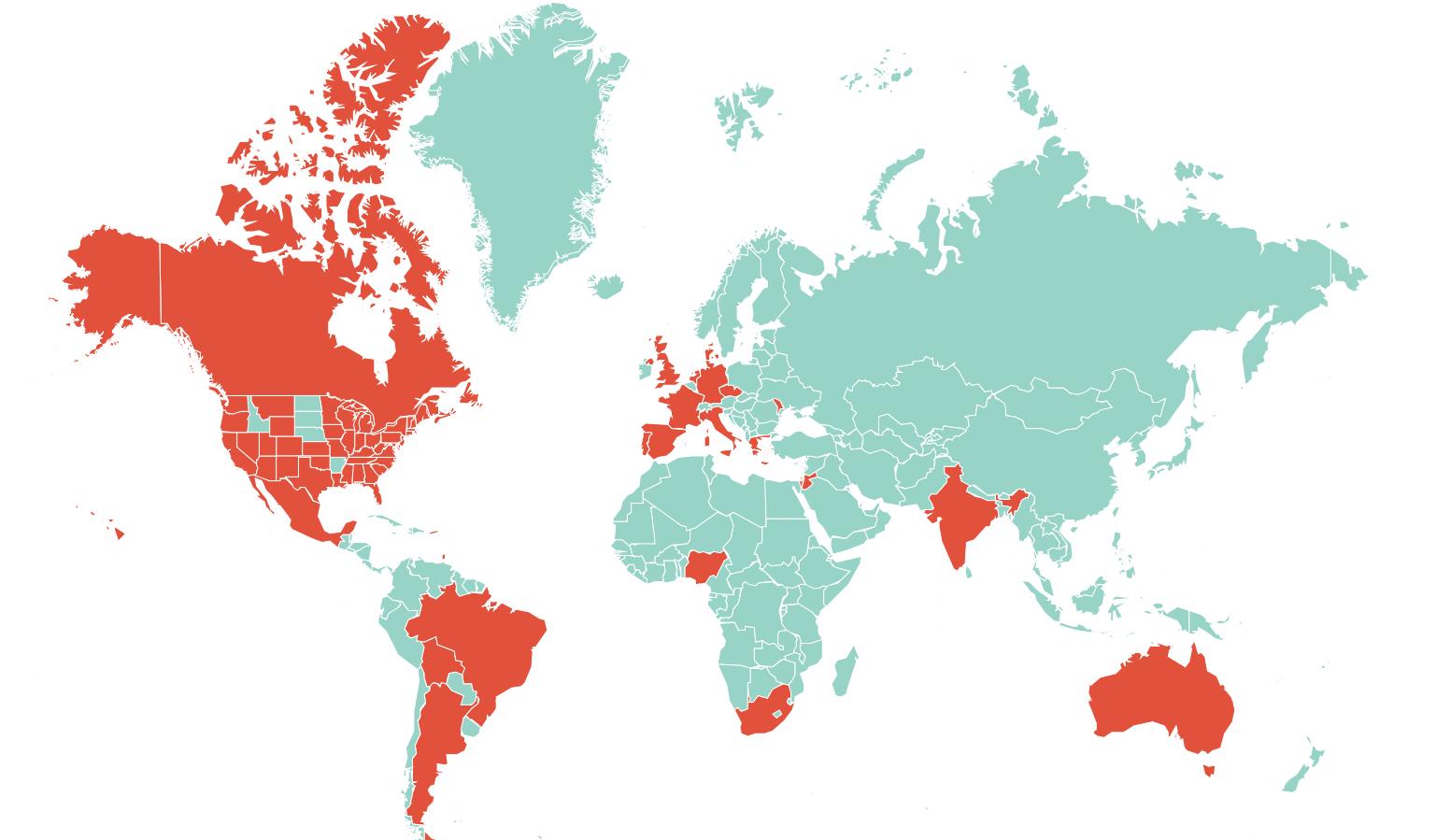


Modeled on The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, the new Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism in Baltimore (above) has, in consultation with Lenfest, launched The Baltimore Banner, one of the largest and most ambitious local digital news start-ups of its kind.

mirroring the structure of The Institute. The Institute advised Chicago Public Media's board on digital transformation and philanthropic models.

The Institute also inspired the founding of the Baltimore based nonprofit, The Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism, which is launching The Baltimore Banner, a new digital news organization serving Baltimore's diverse communities. The Venetoulis Institute has borrowed its structure, mission, and vision from the Institute, serving as a direct replication of our efforts and extension of our impact.

The Institute also partnered with the Rebuild Local News coalition and other organizations to support and help craft the bipartisan Local Journalism Sustainability Act, a major legislative effort to help fund local news through tax credits.



*...and beyond*

## A global community

With more than 1,000 members, The Lenfest News Philanthropy Network is the leading community of practice supporting news fundraisers with courses, workshops, and convenings.

In 2021, The Lenfest Institute continued to build leadership, diversity, and fundraising capabilities throughout the field of local news through the work of the Lenfest News Philanthropy Network.

More than 1,000 people around the world have joined the Network, which has provided courses and workshops in partnership with other thought leaders in the industry to build capacity for fundraising and development professionals in journalism. Topics included grant writing, membership, fundraising fundamentals, data analysis, and more.

The Institute also convened the three-day Lenfest News Philanthropy Summit, the first gathering of like-minded individuals looking to build solid philanthropy practices for news organizations. Hundreds of individuals from more than a dozen countries around the world gathered for workshops, community chats, keynote sessions, and more. Highlights included intimate conversations with leading journalism funders, discussions on how to make philanthropy more equitable and representative of communities, and how to build a culture of philanthropy in news enterprises.

# WEAR MASK

*Brand*

## Solutions to a crisis

In 2021, Philadelphia surpassed its record of 500 homicides, set in 1990. Throughout the year, The Inquirer followed the families of those directly impacted by the city's gun violence crisis, which disproportionately impacted several neighborhoods.

The Inquirer published a series where survivors of shootings showed what it's like when life takes a starkly different turn, and how they have tried to regain some semblance of peace. These stories were part of a solutions-focused approach to the Inquirer's coverage that focused on how the city can address the gun violence crisis.

This photo shows bullet holes in the window of a small grocery store where a 1-year-old child and a man were injured after gunshots were fired into the store at 51st and Haverford in West Philadelphia on July 17. Photo by Jessica Griffin/Philadelphia Inquirer.

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## 2021 by the numbers

**\$12 million**

in grant  
commitments

**\$10 million**

raised from donors

**4,000**

donors

**\$6 million**

in grants to  
The Inquirer

**\$2 million**

in local and  
national grants

**\$4 million**

in fiscal sponsorships and grants  
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\* Donor roster accurate as of December 2021



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