



2026 | CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

A New Chapter for Local News

“
To successfully
evolve, we must
meet our readers
where they are –
and where they
are going in the
future.”

H.F. “GERRY” LENFEST

Ten years ago,

TikTok’s parent company launched its first prototype for TikTok in China; Donald J. Trump won his first term as President of the United States; the World Health Organization declared the Americas measles-free; the Chicago Cubs broke their century-long losing streak and won the World Series; and, H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest launched a new institute for journalism innovation.

In so doing, the visionary cable television entrepreneur ushered in a new chapter for the story of local journalism in the United States.

Named the Institute for Journalism in New Media, the new organization earned headlines from the start for its unique structure: a tax-exempt nonprofit that owned the for-profit Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News, which have collectively won 23 Pulitzer Prizes since 1975.

“Of all of the ventures I have been involved with in my life, nothing is more important than preserving the journalism that has been delivered by these storied news organizations,” Lenfest said.

By design, the organization started at a sprint: Not only did Lenfest donate The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News to the Institute, he also endowed the brand-new organization with \$20 million to advance a local news industry struggling to keep pace with technological and consumer changes.

The conditions were set for both conservancy and transformation. Lenfest saw that the local journalism business was in crisis, while the need for high-quality news and information was proving ever more essential for our democracy. As he said, “It’s a very big problem that requires at-scale solutions.”

By establishing the Institute as the values-driven, nonprofit steward of the local media organizations he had owned, Lenfest ensured that journalistic integrity remained the backbone of the newly created enterprise despite constant changes in consumer behavior and personal technology. Its name said it all: The Institute for Journalism in New Media, later renamed The Lenfest Institute to honor its founder.

To bring his vision to life, Gerry partnered with Philadelphia Foundation President and CEO Pedro A. Ramos to establish the new nonprofit organization. He then tapped David Boardman as chairman and Jim Friedlich as executive director and CEO. Like Gerry, both Friedlich and Boardman were longtime news operators with a deep understanding of the changing nature of journalism, business models, and technology.

“Serving as the founding chair and a board member of The Lenfest Institute has been one of the most rewarding professional experiences I’ve had,” said Boardman. “The impact of this organization, both here in Philadelphia and across the nation, has met and exceeded what most of us dreamed of when the Institute began.”



Changing the story of local news:

Five stories over 10 years

“
Of all the things I've done, this is the most important... because of the journalism.”

— H.F. “GERRY” LENFEST



Now at the 10-year mark, we look back at the Institute's first decade of growth and can see clearly how our first chapter prepared us for the next chapter in transformative work at scale.

Since its inception, the Institute has catalyzed its mission — that every community needs and deserves a great news organization — into investment in new technology, new models for journalism businesses, and innovative initiatives.

As conveners of the local news renaissance, the Institute has provided grant funding, run training programs, and synthesized best practices for local news providers to use.

Early grants funded investigative journalism and key technology upgrades at The Inquirer, experiments in reader revenue strategies at small news organizations across the country,

and helped inspire important journalism infrastructure such as Report for America and the News Revenue Hub.

In total, the Institute has awarded more than \$117 million in grants over the past decade, with a focus on revenue strategies, technology, and community engagement.

Today, leveraging innate business instincts for prescient, entrepreneurial experiments — as Gerry would have instructed us — we are assessing the latest changes in our field and in our world and planning a roadmap for the next five years of our mission and work to guide us to 2030, and beyond.

At this 10-year inflection point, we are also taking stock of our first decade, tracing our impacts and celebrating successes. With this in mind, we have collected five stories across 10 years to showcase the depth and breadth of The Lenfest Institute's imprint.

1. Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest at The Curtis Institute of Music. Michael S. Wirtz/Philadelphia Inquirer. 2. Gerry Lenfest was one of Philadelphia's leading civic leaders and philanthropists. Michael Bryant/Philadelphia Inquirer. 3. Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest attend a 2017 Lenfest Institute event. 4. Marguerite and Gerry Lenfest at the groundbreaking ceremony for a new Curtis Institute building in 2009. Akira Suwa/Philadelphia Inquirer. 5. Gerry Lenfest signs an agreement to donate The Philadelphia Inquirer to a new nonprofit organization on January 12, 2016. Pedro A. Ramos, president and CEO of the Philadelphia Foundation, and former Inquirer Publisher Terry Egger look on. Rich Schultz/AP. 6. Gerry Lenfest speaks at a Philadelphia Inquirer event in 2017. Michael Bryant/Philadelphia Inquirer.

THE LENFEST INSTITUTE by the numbers

\$117.6 million

in grants awarded

600

organizations awarded grants

\$170.8 million

raised from philanthropy

**\$11.9 million to
22 organizations**

fiscal sponsorships provided

**4,800
individuals and news organizations**

participating in Lenfest Communities of Practice

“

Has it really only been 10 years? It honestly feels like The Lenfest Institute has been part of the journalism community for decades. Few organizations have done more to thoughtfully and meaningfully push this industry forward.”

ARON PILHOFER

CHIEF PRODUCT AND MEMBERSHIP OFFICER, CHICAGO PUBLIC MEDIA

TRANSFORMING

The Philadelphia Inquirer, the largest American newspaper under nonprofit ownership



From its earliest days, the Institute has led the search for sustainable business models for great American local news organizations. As the nonprofit, non-controlling owner of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Institute has helped steward The Inquirer as its leaders have evolved it into a thriving, self-sustaining digital business.



By using The Inquirer as a test kitchen for experimentation in local news, The Lenfest Institute developed a model that it has since used across a spectrum of local-news innovations: Experiment locally, then share nationally.

"The Institute was created to collaborate with The Inquirer to establish a model to continue essential public service news and information," said Marguerite Lenfest, philanthropist and wife of Gerry Lenfest. "The partnership between the Institute and The Inquirer has been successful, and we have encouraged others to replicate this partnership to save local journalism."

With financial support and the Institute's urging, The Inquirer launched a digital subscription offering for the first time in 2017. The Inquirer now has over \$25 million in annual digital reader revenue and more than 120,000 digital subscribers, helping fund a 220-person newsroom, by far the largest news team in the region. The Inquirer has successfully developed new revenue streams, including events, new forms of advertising, and a broad range of philanthropic fundraising.

"Redemption began with a visionary philanthropist, H.F. 'Gerry' Lenfest, who set out to save The Inquirer and provided the wherewithal to do it. He established The Lenfest Institute for Journalism, our nonprofit

owner, and pursued an innovative tax structure that created a for-profit Inquirer with a separate board. Both are the indispensable keys to our stability and success," Inquirer Publisher Elizabeth A. Hughes wrote in a recent essay in The Inquirer.

"Lenfest's generosity planted the news philanthropy seed in Philadelphia and, through the Institute, established a funding mechanism that supports our journalism. His donation, in cash, allowed The Inquirer to modernize and transform from a legacy print shop to a modern multiplatform news organization," she wrote.

The Lenfest family's generosity motivated others. Since its founding, The Lenfest Institute has raised and donated \$49.3 million from 3,677 donors for the transformation of The Philadelphia Inquirer.

The lessons and pathways to earned revenue, like digital subscriptions for The Inquirer, have since been shared in the Institute's Beyond Print program, which helps hundreds of historically print-focused news outlets evolve to digital sustainability.



1. The late Michael Days, an editor at The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News, Lenfest Institute Executive Director and CEO Jim Friedlich, and Inquirer journalists who participated in an Institute fellowship program in The Inquirer newsroom in 2020. 2. Principal Amy Williams, outside of her North Philadelphia school in May 2021. The Inquirer reported on the challenges of absenteeism in Philadelphia's public schools. Heather Khalifa/Philadelphia Inquirer 3. Voters line up at a polling place on Election Day 2024. Jessica Griffin/Staff Photographer 4. Inquirer photojournalists Heather Khalifa and Jessica Griffin covered the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. "With each area that they breached, in the back of my mind, I kept thinking they'd get stopped — but they didn't," Griffin said. Jessica Griffin/Philadelphia Inquirer 5. The Lenfest Institute's first grant to The Philadelphia Inquirer supported its "Toxic City" investigation, a series that combined innovative and old-fashioned reporting methods to expose unhealthy environmental conditions affecting children. In response, the state and school district directed millions of dollars to emergency cleanup of lead paint and asbestos fibers in schools. Jessica Griffin/Philadelphia Inquirer. 6. Inquirer journalist Ellie Silverman reported from Philadelphia's first COVID-19 testing site in March 2020. Tim Tai/Philadelphia Inquirer 7. Cheryl Edwards (right) was discovered abandoned as a newborn in a vacant West Philly rowhouse in 1967. After a story in The Inquirer and Daily News was published in 2021, relatives of her biological family stepped forward. Cheryl and her family were reunited. Charles Fox/Philadelphia Inquirer 8. Philadelphia-area students line up during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. The Inquirer's coverage of the pandemic helped Philadelphians stay safe and informed. Jessica Griffin/Philadelphia Inquirer.



The Philadelphia Inquirer



LAUNCHING & GROWING

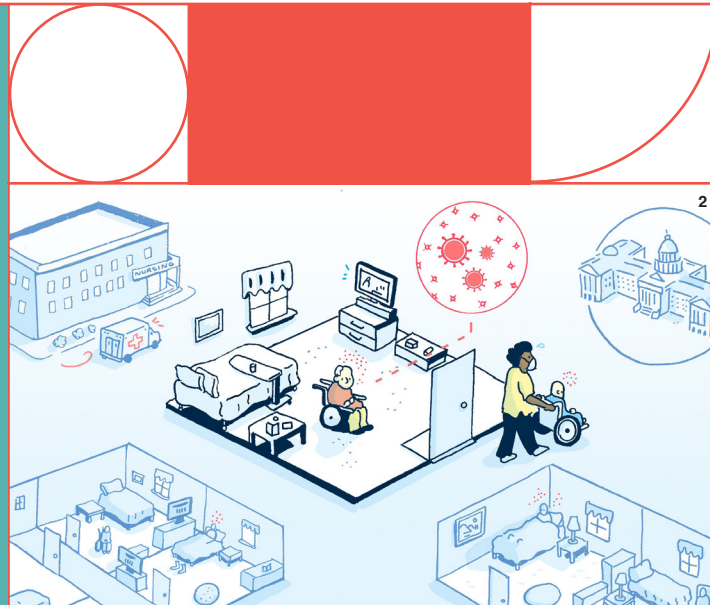
Spotlight PA, the innovative collaborative newsroom with more than 125 publishing partners across Pennsylvania



“Lenfest has both strengthened our foundation and accelerated our progress. Their work continues to raise the bar for us and for the entire field.”

STEWART BAINUM JR., BALTIMORE BANNER FOUNDER AND PHILANTHROPIST

Following years of declining statehouse coverage in Pennsylvania, the country’s largest swing state, leaders at The Lenfest Institute and journalism partners across the Commonwealth saw the need for improved news resources to cover statehouse and statewide issues emanating from Harrisburg.



1. Spotlight PA has reported extensively on how the state is spending opioid settlement funds. There has been controversy over spending it on syringe services. Photo by Nate Smallwood.
2. Spotlight PA produced high-impact reporting on nursing homes during the pandemic. Illustration by Dan Nott.



3. Spotlight PA reported on a shrinking property tax rebate program for Philadelphians. A major expansion was later signed into law. Illustration by Daniel Fishel. 4. A Spotlight PA State College investigation dug into alleged corruption by the city manager of DuBois, Pa. In his quest to transform the small town about 100 miles from Pittsburgh, prosecutors allege that he lined his own pockets with hundreds of thousands of public and nonprofit dollars. Photo by Nate Smallwood. 5. Spotlight PA’s “Hidden Tab” investigation delved into how taxpayers foot a huge bill to run Pennsylvania’s full-time legislature, but are blocked from many details. Illustration by Leise Hook. 6. Housing advocates pushed a huge bill to run Pennsylvania’s full-time legislature, but are blocked from many details. Illustration by Leise Hook. 6. Housing advocates pushed a huge bill to run Pennsylvania’s full-time legislature, but are blocked from many details. Illustration by Leise Hook. 6. Housing advocates pushed a huge bill to run Pennsylvania’s full-time legislature, but are blocked from many details. Illustration by Leise Hook.



Spotlight PA, which launched in 2019 with a handful of reporters and news media partners, now employs 35 journalists and news executives across the state. Spotlight PA’s distinctive brand of watchdog reporting has so far generated 35 policy changes, 14 new bills, and eight legal victories.

The Lenfest Institute raised \$3 million in new funds to launch the enterprise, and in so doing, established a new way to cover the statehouse and the state. With more than 125 news distribution partners publishing its journalism at no cost across the state, Spotlight PA journalism is now a part of nearly every major newspaper and NPR station in Pennsylvania.

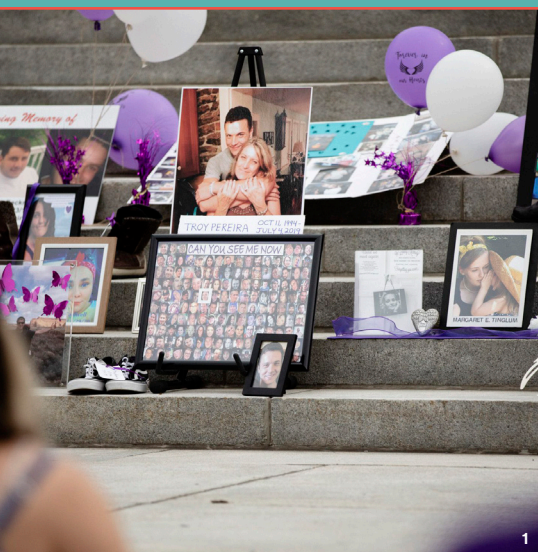
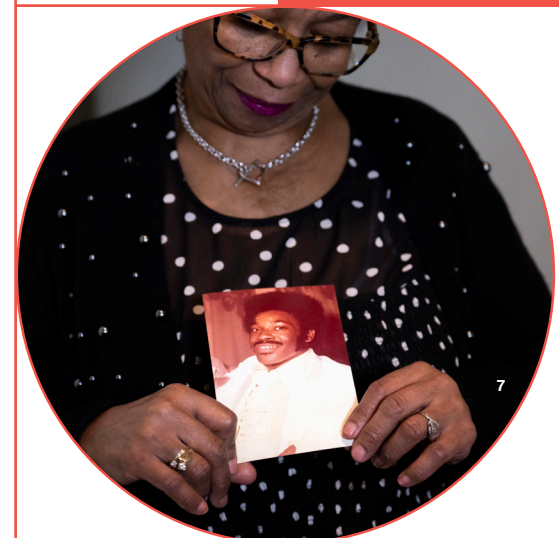
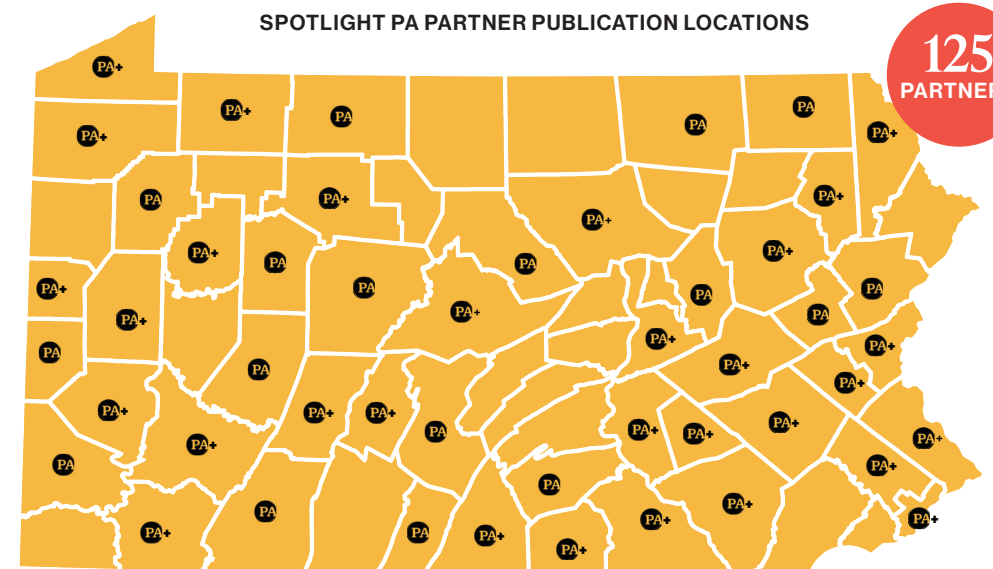
From the beginning, Spotlight PA’s Founding Editor and CEO Christopher Baxter’s vision was a big one. “I saw a statewide news organization, statewide potential, massive potential audience, massive potential donor base,” he said.

Spotlight PA’s model has evolved over the years: In July 2025, Spotlight PA announced its intention to expand its remit by building a network of community newsrooms and expanding local news across the state, growing its partnerships with commercial television stations, newspapers, and online outlets in Pennsylvania.

The organization’s influence extends beyond Pennsylvania as the Spotlight PA model inspired other organizations, including Spotlight Delaware and The Baltimore Banner, each advised by The Lenfest Institute.

“The Lenfest Institute has had an outsized impact on The Baltimore Banner and on my own understanding of how to build sustainable local news,” said Banner founder and philanthropist Stewart Bainum Jr. “Lenfest has both strengthened our foundation and accelerated our progress. Their work continues to raise the bar for us and for the entire field.”

SPOTLIGHT PA PARTNER PUBLICATION LOCATIONS



CULTIVATING

a vibrant news community in Philadelphia that proves what's possible for local journalism

As Gerry Lenfest put it so well, "Where better than Philadelphia to invent the future of the free press?"

The Lenfest Institute has designed and led multi-year efforts to bring high-quality, independent news and information to all Philadelphia communities, most notably with the launch of Every Voice, Every Vote, the largest citywide news and civic engagement coalition in America.

Launched in 2023, the four-year, \$3.4 million program partnered with 71 local news and community organizations to connect residents with vital information about their local candidates, government, and elected officials. The initiative supports projects focused on civic education, civic engagement, and solutions journalism. Lead support for Every Voice, Every Vote is provided by the William Penn Foundation.

"Led by The Lenfest Institute, the citywide Every Voice, Every Vote local news program has been very effective in gaining the insights of residents about the issues that really matter to them and elevating community voice," said Shawn McCaney, executive director of the William Penn Foundation. "The Lenfest Institute's work to support civic journalism through dozens of outlets, mediums, and community organizations helps to ensure there are trusted sources of information available to all Philadelphians. We believe that Every Voice, Every Vote is an important model of how civic news projects support a healthy democracy and it reflects Philadelphia's growing role as a national leader in local news."

Partners have reported measurably stronger connections with their audiences.

"Never in the city's history have there been so many mayoral forums or so much news coverage on so many topics critical to the

future of our city," said the Rev. Luis Cortés Jr., the founder and CEO of Esperanza, a Philadelphia-based social services organization active in both city and national politics.

The city-wide approach for Every Voice, Every Vote provides a national model for how to leverage a diverse array of local news and community organizations for shared benefit, how to prioritize civic literacy, and how to grow new ties with local audiences.

The Philadelphia Media Founders Exchange, a business accelerator program for media entrepreneurs, and the Philadelphia Local News Sustainability Initiative, a funding program for local news organizations that focuses on business stability, are two additional components to the Institute's strategy to strengthen the local news ecosystem in Philadelphia.

The national recognition of the impact of The Lenfest Institute's local news ecosystem efforts reflects the Institute's "experiment locally and scale nationally" approach. In 2024, Press Forward, the national philanthropic effort to support local news, held up Philadelphia as a model to replicate. The Knight Foundation tapped the Institute to create the Knight Communities Network, which consults eight emerging news ecosystem efforts in Lexington, Ky.; State College, Pa.; Tallahassee, Fl.; Charlotte, N.C.; Gary, Ind.; Miami, Fl.; Wichita, Kan.; and Philadelphia.



1. Philadelphia-based content creators, including Will Toms pictured here, partnered with Every Voice, Every Vote to share civic information with their followers. Photo by Hannah Yoon. 2. WURD Radio host Andrea Lawful-Sanders asks a question to the Philadelphia mayoral candidates at an Every Voice, Every Vote forum. Photo by Zamani Feelings. 3. SPA Youth Vote's annual Give Us a Ballot March in celebration of National Vote Early Day. Courtesy of PA Youth Vote. 4. Philadelphia Mayor Cherrille L. Parker speaks at an Every Voice, Every Vote forum. Photo by Zamani Feelings. 5. Reverend Dr. Alyn E. Waller, the senior pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, speaks at an Every Voice, Every Vote forum. Enon is a member of the Every Voice, Every Vote coalition. Photo by Zamani Feelings. 6. Staff members of Congreso, an Every Voice, Every Vote coalition member, share voting information with community members. Photo by Zamani Feelings.



Every Voice Every Vote

CONVENING & CONNECTING

news industry leaders to transform local journalism at scale

Just as the Institute’s test-kitchen in both Philadelphia and Pennsylvania has been replicated across the country, the Institute has emerged as a leading convener of the local news industry. The Institute has launched several of the most important annual events in our field, leading debates, helping forge major new partnerships, and raising awareness of the local news crisis on the national stage.

For five years, the Institute has partnered with The Aspen Institute to host the Local News Summit, a convening for industry leaders to reflect and brainstorm together.

Conversations at the Local News Summit resonate far beyond the event itself, and often become defining moments for the industry. CEO Neil Chase credits a conversation at the Summit for CalMatters’ merger with The Markup, which brought together two innovative digital-first newsrooms in a new model. During the inaugural summit in 2022, the seeds of Press Forward, a \$500 million nationwide funding coalition for local news, were planted when leaders from The Lenfest Institute, MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and Chalkbeat met to imagine a national movement for stronger funding of local journalism.

In addition, with over 3,000 members, The Lenfest News Philanthropy Network has become the largest organization in the world serving the needs of business professionals who raise money on behalf of local news organizations. The Network includes an ongoing

community of practice and peer learning, as well as the only in-person annual conference serving the growing field of news philanthropy.

“It’s the first time I’ve really felt in a conference space, ‘Oh my gosh I’m in a room with my peers,’” said Megan Tackett, associate publisher at the Aspen Daily News, who credits the summit with helping her make successful donor pitches to attract new philanthropic dollars. “I feel like that wouldn’t have happened without this [conference].”

Where these leaders once competed, they now work together — thanks in large part to the Institute’s collaborative approach and convenings.

“The Lenfest Institute has played an extraordinary role in building the field of news philanthropy,” said Dale Anglin, Press Forward’s executive director. “From early webinar trainings for news fundraisers to the powerful energy of the first in-person conference in 2025, they have brought people together around a shared belief in what’s possible. Their work is helping lay the foundation for a stronger, more sustainable future for local news.”



“The Lenfest Institute has played an extraordinary role in building the field of news philanthropy. Their work is helping lay the foundation for a stronger, more sustainable future for local news.”

DALE ANGLIN, PRESS FORWARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



LENFEST NEWS PHILANTHROPY SUMMIT 2025

THE LENFEST INSTITUTE | Press Forward



1. Chicago Public Media CEO Melissa Bell, Mountain Outlaw (Montana) Managing Editor Bella Butler and Mo News Founder Moshesh Oinounou speak at the 2025 Local News Summit in New Orleans 2. NBC Head of Standards Noreen Gillespie, formerly of Microsoft, at the 2024 Local News Summit in Charleston, S.C. 3. About 30 fundraising professionals gathered at The Lenfest Institute office in Philadelphia for a 2019 Lenfest Seminar workshop about fundraising. This gathering led to the creation of the Lenfest News Philanthropy Network. 4. Former New York Times Executive Editor Dean Baquet, who now leads a local investigative fellowship at the Times, speaks at the 2025 Local News Summit in New Orleans. 5. Axios Local Managing Editor Delano Massey at the 2024 Local News Summit. 6. Spotlight PA CEO Christopher Baxter and Press Forward Executive Director Dale R. Anglin at the 2025 Local News Summit. 7. Haitian Times founder Garry Pierre-Pierre at the 2024 Local News Summit.



INSPIRING

local news reinvention across the nation

The Lenfest Institute has helped launch, incubate, or provide foundational advice and capital to several of the local news industry's most important new enterprises. Examples abound. Created to share The Lenfest Institute's business expertise at scale, the Lenfest Expert Network provides advice, counsel, and management consulting support to news organizations across the country.

Lenfest's Expert Network has been an outstanding asset and program," said Monique Curry-Mims, principal and publisher at Civic Capital, who participated in the Lenfest Expert Network. "The thought partnership and strategic insights helped me gain perspective and clarify the direction and strategy I should consider."

Report for America, which has helped fund and train more than 750 journalists in new local reporting positions in over 420 newsrooms nationwide, was incubated by Steven Waldman as a Lenfest Entrepreneur-in-Residence in 2017. The Institute served as fiscal sponsor and provided the first institutional capital for Rebuild Local News, the leading support organization for city, state, and federal regulatory and legislative policy changes in support of local news.

"I'm not sure that either Report for America or Rebuild Local News would exist without Lenfest," said Waldman, who cofounded both organizations. "It was the absolute first funder for Report for America — when it was just a concept. And Lenfest was one of the earliest believers that public policy needed to be a critical part of the effort to revive journalism."

In the past decade, the Lenfest Institute has provided fiscal sponsorship to 22 organizations that are reinventing local news at scale and could not have launched without the Institute's partnership, including Capital B, The City, Newspaper, BlueLena, and the National Trust for Local News.

Perhaps of greatest potential impact, The Lenfest Institute has launched the largest artificial intelligence fellowship program in American journalism, the Lenfest AI Collaborative and Fellowship Program. Created in partnership with OpenAI and Microsoft, this \$10 million program empowers local news organizations to use AI to drive business sustainability and news innovation by hiring dedicated AI engineers.

"I honestly didn't know about The Lenfest Institute until I met Jim Friedlich a couple of years ago and we became fast friends," said Tom Rubin, chief of intellectual property and content at OpenAI. "Since then, I've consistently been blown away by the vital work they do and the dedication and creativity they demonstrate, which is unexcelled by any other organization. I'm so grateful that our paths crossed."

"I'm not sure that either Report for America or Rebuild Local News would exist without Lenfest."

STEVEN WALDMAN, A 2017 LENFEST ENTREPRENEUR-IN-RESIDENCE

"I've consistently been blown away by the vital work they do and the dedication and creativity they demonstrate, which is unexcelled by any other organization. I'm so grateful that our paths crossed."

TOM RUBIN, CHIEF OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND CONTENT AT OPENAI



1. From 2018-2020, the Institute helped lead the Facebook Local News Accelerators to develop and enhance digital subscription acquisition, retention, and membership strategies in newsrooms across the country. 2-5. Leaders from OpenAI, Microsoft, and the news organizations participating in the Lenfest AI Collaborative and Fellowship Program speak at a 2025 gathering at Microsoft's headquarters near Seattle. Photos courtesy of Microsoft.

Writing the next chapter of local news

Building on the foundation of our first decade, we see the work ahead as more critical than ever.

The Institute is committed to leveraging capital, business expertise, and philanthropy to build durable, independent local news that serves the public interest. The Institute was designed and built to address never-ending changes in consumer behavior, technology, and business models that shape the future of important local journalism. We know our focus: we unlock capital, we spur innovation, and we impact the future of local news at great scale.

We were founded in a time of great disruption. We were organized and designed to address that disruption. Now, in a time of even greater disruption, we are ready to lead with urgency.



The Lenfest Institute is proud to call Philadelphia home, and we will continue to invest in local journalism.

Thank you for your support of The Lenfest Institute. Together, we will build the next generation of local news for the next decade — and beyond.

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2026 | CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

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