About Us

The Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting is a non-profit, nonpartisan newsroom founded in 2013 by Louisville Public Media, a 501(c)3 corporation that operates three public radio stations, including 89.3 WFPL News. KyCIR works with WFPL and other news partners across the region to produce and distribute original reporting in the public interest. Our journalism affects you, your neighborhood and your commonwealth.

Our mission is to protect society’s most vulnerable citizens, expose wrongdoing in the public and private sectors, increase transparency in government and hold leaders accountable, all in accordance with journalism’s highest standards.

Many newsrooms today are facing difficult choices. Some are shrinking staff and cutting back on investigative reporting, which takes significant time and resources.

At KyCIR, we believe this in-depth reporting is critical. Our journalism shines a light on major problems in our city and state, sparks conversation and spurs solutions to the commonwealth’s woes. We are members of our community. And our work is funded and supported by our community.

“What you do is important. Keep up the good work.”
— Larry Meier, Charlestown, IN
A Note From The President

In the years since we started the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting, investment in local accountability journalism in our state and across the country has continued to decline.

But exposing systemic injustice, protecting the vulnerable and righting public wrongs are as important now as they’ve ever been. That’s why we have protected our investment and continue to grow the reach and impact of our work.

The stories speak for themselves. Exposing a flawed justice system in which three of every four jailed youth in Louisville are black. Bringing forward cases of sexual harassment of Kentucky corrections workers on the job. Prompting change in a public housing complex overrun by bedbugs. And a series, “Fatal Flaws,” showing how state government is failing to keep Kentucky workers safe — and bringing about new policies to fix the problems we revealed.

This is some of the work KyCIR produced in 2018, a year in which we reached more people with more work than ever before.

Investigative journalism is an essential tool of our democracy. It is a corrective for the individual against institutions and governments that carry outsized influence. And it empowers all of us to act — in our lives, jobs and communities.

In places where local journalism has disappeared, fewer people are engaging with their government by running for office. And voters are more polarized, substituting national partisan politics in the absence of deep reporting on local issues.

With your help, we’re doing our part to make sure that doesn’t happen in Kentucky.

We are proud of the work we’ve done at KyCIR, and we look forward to continuing our work for you. Thank you for your support. You make investigative journalism in Kentucky possible.

Stephen George
President, Louisville Public Media

A Note From KyCIR’s Managing Editor

The KyCIR team’s mission is journalism with the potential to spark change. That work is its own — and best — reward.

We see the reverberations of our work every day. Sometimes it’s in big ways: government agencies admitting their flaws and promising to do better after we exposed systemic problems, or legislators citing our work when they introduce bills meant to strengthen accountability.

We also feel the power of our work in much less visible ways: when a resident of a public housing complex long infested by bedbugs calls us to tell us the maintenance crew came through with a powerful new vacuum. When a father propelled by grief gets the chance to confront a public official who let his son down, and he insists our reporter be allowed to witness it. When a man tormented by childhood sexual abuse trusts us with his story, and then two more men abused by the same coach are willing to do the same.

Throughout this report, you’ll see summaries of the crucial local journalism we produced throughout 2018. Please recognize your own role in it: We are a small, local investigative team surviving and thriving in an age where neither is certain. Anyone who passed along a story idea, read our work or put their money toward supporting KyCIR made it possible. I hope you share in our pride.

Sincerely,

Kate Howard
Managing Editor, Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting

Photo: J. Tyler Franklin / LPM
KyCIR Staff

R.G. Dunlop | Reporter

R.G. Dunlop is an award-winning investigative reporter whose work has exposed government corruption and resulted in numerous reforms. He worked 35 years at the Courier Journal in a variety of positions, including Eastern Kentucky bureau chief, Legal Affairs reporter, City Editor, and State Enterprise Reporter. Dunlop is a three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and a winner of a Peabody Award. He was twice a member of teams that won George Polk Awards. He graduated from Miami University and earned a master’s degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Kate Howard | Managing Editor

Kate Howard became managing editor of KyCIR in July 2018. She first joined the team in 2016 as an investigative reporter. Before KyCIR, Howard spent 12 years as a newspaper reporter, with stints at The Tennessean, The Florida Times-Union and the Omaha World-Herald. Howard’s work has been the recipient of a national Investigative Reporters and Editors award and numerous state and regional awards. Howard is originally from Rhode Island and graduated from Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I.

Alexandra Kanik | Data Reporter

Kanik brings the numbers to life as data reporter for Louisville Public Media and KyCIR. She also serves on the Reader Advisory Board for MediaShift, where she worked as metrics section editor. Kanik grew up in Pittsburgh and studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art. She began her career in journalism as interactive developer and metrics analyst with PublicSource, a nonprofit news organization in Pittsburgh.

Eleanor Klibanoff | Reporter

Eleanor Klibanoff joined the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting in June 2017. She previously worked at Keystone Crossroads, a public radio project covering urban decline and recovery in the Rust Belt. She was a Kroc Fellow at NPR and a recipient of a Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting grant to cover maternal healthcare in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Originally from Atlanta, Klibanoff graduated from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., with a degree in Political Communication.

Caitlin McGlade | Reporter

Caitlin McGlade joined KyCIR in January 2019. She came to KyCIR after nine years of watchdog reporting for the Courier Journal, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, the Arizona Republic and the Toledo Free Press. While in Arizona, McGlade was named a finalist for the prestigious Livingston Award for an investigation into dangerous school buses. McGlade is an Ohio native and graduate of Ohio University.

Jacob Ryan | Reporter

Jacob Ryan joined the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting in December 2017. For three years prior, he worked as a WFPL News reporter and covered issues including City Hall, transportation, public safety and housing. He is a recipient of a Peabody Award, a national Investigative Reporters and Editors award, a Sidney Award from the Sidney Hillman Foundation and numerous regional and local awards. Ryan is originally from Eddyville, Kentucky. He’s a graduate of Western Kentucky University.
A Growing Audience

"As editor of a local community newspaper, the ability to republish their work to better inform our readers is an important part of the Center’s mission and adds value to our entire state."
— Forrest Berkshire, editor of Kentucky Standard, Bardstown

"The work of local journalism is more important than ever... Thank you WFPL & KyCIR for shining the light across Kentucky!"
— Connor Cafferty, Kitty Hawk, NC

"Thank you for continuously keeping your programming fresh and updated. KyCIR is great. This is the best public media station I have come across during all my years of traveling and living in different states."
— Megan Osborn, Louisville, KY

Look at our audience by any measure, and you’ll see that our work is reaching more and more people.

Our email newsletter subscriptions grew by nearly 25%.

Our membership skyrocketed in 2018, too, surpassing 3,000 members.

More readers are visiting our website than ever, and they are not just skimming and moving on. Last year, our average amount of time spent on our most popular stories grew to nearly six and a half minutes, telling us readers like what they see — and they’re willing to take the time to read our investigations.

We reached thousands more people through our stories broadcast on WFPL and public radio stations through the country. More than a dozen news outlets ran our investigations. We also saw new audiences through our collaborations with the Center for Public Integrity, a Washington, D.C.-based national news nonprofit, and the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting.

NUMBER OF EMAIL NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS GREW BY NEARLY 25%

MEMBERSHIP SURPASSED 3,000 MEMBERS

TIME SPENT ON OUR MOST POPULAR STORIES GREW TO NEARLY 6½ MINUTES
We don’t measure our work by clicks.

We measure by action.

Our work spurred changed policies, deeper scrutiny and more openness. We shed light on ineffectual government policies and inadequate police investigations. We gave voice to vulnerable citizens whose problems might have gone ignored. We changed Kentucky in meaningful, tangible ways.

This is a sampling of the stories that continue to reverberate in the commonwealth.

The Power of Our Journalism

INEQUALITY

Despite calls for help, bedbugs infest Louisville public housing complex

Reporter Jacob Ryan uncovered a troubling problem in Louisville’s public housing for the elderly and disabled: a yearslong bedbug infestation. Residents complained, but nothing happened. In fact, residents from 150 units asked the housing authority for help with bedbugs at least three times in a two-year span.

After our reporting, the Louisville Metro Housing Authority finally acknowledged the problem - and took real steps to address it.

Kentucky reformed juvenile justice and left black youth behind

A project funded by the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism focused on the racial disparities experienced by black youth in Kentucky’s juvenile justice system. Kate Howard’s reporting found that three of every four youth in Louisville’s lockup are black, despite being only 27 percent of the population. The stories prompted a larger community conversation and renewed attention on a complicated, systemic problem.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Coach accused of molestation kept working with kids for 15 years

Reporter R.G. Dunlop uncovered a story about a man devastated by sexual molestation in his youth and the lack of accountability that followed for a beloved coach. After our reporting, two more victims came forward and told their stories, too.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Sexual harassment in state government

This sweeping project looked across state government to see how agencies were handling sexual harassment allegations. Our reporting, bolstered by collaboration from the whole WFPL newsroom, found dramatic inconsistencies and agencies unwilling to call out most behavior as sexual harassment.

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

We were sued – twice – and won

While most public agencies provided us with the records we were entitled to for that sexual harassment investigation, some insisted on protecting the names of the employees accused of sexual harassment. Although the attorney general’s office upheld our right to see the names of all employees accused of misconduct, two agencies chose instead to sue KyCIR.

We won both lawsuits, and the courts upheld what we knew all along: that the public has a right to know how its taxpayer funded government handles accusations of wrongdoing.
For years, when Kentuckians died on the job, the commonwealth let them down.

A few bureaucrats knew it, but didn’t say so publicly. A tight-knit cadre of grieving families knew it, but had no venue to share their stories. That’s why KyCIR and our reporting partners spent more than six months investigating the state’s failure to properly investigate workplace deaths.

KyCIR reporter Eleanor Klibanoff scoured thousands of pages of public records and conducted dozens of interviews to see how well the state’s worker safety agency was investigating fatalities on the job. When the federal government released its own bombshell report, Klibanoff confirmed what the records showed: the state’s fatality investigations were insufficient, and as a result, workers continued to be at risk.

We partnered on this investigation with the Center for Public Integrity and the Ohio Valley ReSource. With the help of these partners, we deepened our work, broadened our audience and ensured our work on this important issue was as thorough and conclusive as possible.

Our efforts were rewarded with change: within weeks, the state’s Labor Cabinet began to quietly acknowledge the issues our reporting raised. State officials increased training and resources, then launched an internal investigation. Finally, they acknowledged to us, and to grieving families, that the agency hadn’t done enough. They promised to do better.

In the months and years that come, we will be watching to see whether they do.
Award-Winning Journalism

**PEABODY AWARD**

The Peabody Award recognizes the nation’s most powerful storytelling and is the highest honor in radio.

2017 Radio/Podcast – “The Pope’s Long Con”

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS & EDITORS**

The country’s top investigative journalism association honors the best work in the nation.


2017 Investigative Radio – 1st Place – “The Pope’s Long Con”

2017 Investigative Radio – Finalist – “Louisville Police Don’t Enforce Immigration – But Help the Feds Do It”

2016 Investigative Radio – 1st Place – “The University Of Louisville, A Big Donor And Ownership Of An Abandoned Factory”

2015 Investigative Radio – 1st Place – “Only In Kentucky: Jailers Without Jails”


**ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH CARE JOURNALISTS**

The AHCJ awards recognize the best health reporting nationwide in print, broadcast and online media.

2018 Consumer Health (large outlets, 1st place) – “Fatal Flaws: How Kentucky Is Failing Its Workers,” by KyCIR, the Ohio Valley ReSource and the Center for Public Integrity

2014 Investigative Radio – “The University of Louisville, A Big Donor And Ownership Of An Abandoned Factory”

**EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD**

The Radio Television Digital News Association honors outstanding achievements in electronic journalism.

2019 Regional Award – “Fatal Flaws: How Kentucky Is Failing Its Workers”

**EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL JOURNALISM AWARDS**

Excellence in Financial Journalism Awards, sponsored by the New York State Society of CPAs, honor the best in business news journalism from across the nation.

2019 Best Audio, Small Media - “Fatal Flaws: How Kentucky Is Failing Its Workers”

**SIDNEY AWARD**

The Sidney Hillman Foundation’s national award honors the best “journalism in the service of the common good.”

January 2015 – “Only in Kentucky: Jailers Without Jails”

**GREEN EYESHADE**

The Society of Professional Journalists’ annual Green Eyeshade Awards honor the best online, radio, print and television journalism in the southeastern United States.

2018 Investigative Reporting (Radio) – 1st Place – “Louisville Police Don’t Enforce Immigration – But Help the Feds Do It”

2017 Investigative Reporting (Radio) – 1st Place – “U of L Investigation”

2017 Investigative Reporting (Radio) – 2nd Place – “Kentucky Constables”

2016 Best In Radio – “Trouble Behind Bars”

2016 Investigative Reporting (Radio) – 1st Place – “Only In Kentucky: Jailers Without Jails”
2016 Investigative Reporting (Online) – 2nd Place – “Kicked Out Of The Commonwealth”
2016 Public Service In Radio – 1st Place – “Trouble Behind Bars”
2015 Investigative Reporting (Online) – 1st Place – “The Congressman, His Wife and the Lobbyist”
2015 Investigative Reporting (Radio) – 2nd Place – “Troubled Tiger Exhibit Puts Public’s Safety At Risk”

KENTUCKY ASSOCIATED PRESS BROADCASTERS
2018 Investigative Reporting – “Despite Calls For Help, Bedbugs Infest Louisville Public Housing Complex”
2017 Investigative Reporting – “Louisville Police Don’t Enforce Immigration – But Help the Feds Do It”
2016 Investigative Reporting – “U of L Foundation Bought an Empty Factory in Oklahoma — Because a Donor Asked”
2016 Investigative Reporting Finalist – “Kentucky Constables: Untrained and Unaccountable”
2015 Best Long Enterprise Reporting – “Police in Kentucky Town Ship Mentally Ill Man To Florida, Defying Judge’s Order”, “Only in Kentucky: Jailers Without Jails”
2015 Best Special/Documentary – “Trouble Behind Bars”

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
KyCIR won numerous awards each year in the online and radio categories of the SPJ Metro Louisville contest.

“Listened for a very long time. So impressed by the work KyCIR has done this year. Keep it up!”
— Matthew and Madeline Poulin, La Grange
The Advisory Council serves to provide ongoing feedback on the work produced by the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting. The purpose of the council is to represent the diverse interests of the public in regular meetings with KyCIR, and to serve as ambassadors in the community.

The Advisory Council meets quarterly and reviews the program goals and significant decisions of KyCIR, and advises management on whether the newsroom is meeting the needs of the communities it serves. The role of the council is solely advisory in nature.

MEMBERS:

Molly Bingham
Molly Bingham is the president and CEO of Orb Media. An award-winning documentary filmmaker, photographer and journalist, her work has been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Rolling Stone, The Independent and Vanity Fair. Molly serves on the boards of The Overseas Press Club and The Listen Campaign. A graduate of Harvard University, Bingham was awarded a Nieman Fellowship in 2004, where she first began developing Orb’s core concepts.

Rufus Friday
Rufus M. Friday is a former president and publisher of the Lexington Herald-Leader and kyfcirc.org.

He joined H-L Media company in June 2011, after serving six and a half years as president and publisher at the Tri-City Herald in Kennewick, Washington State. In September 2018, he launched Rufus Friday Consulting LLC. Friday is a member of the publisher advisory board for Stars & Stripes Newspapers, based in Washington, D.C. and a past board member for the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association.

Bennie L. Ivory
Bennie Ivory retired as editor of the Louisville Courier Journal in 2013 after 16 years at the helm of Louisville’s daily newspaper and more than 40 years in journalism.

Ivory started his career as a reporter at The Sentinel-Record in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and served as an executive editor at Florida Today and The News Journal in Wilmington, Delaware, before coming to Louisville. The Courier Journal was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize twice under his tenure. Ivory has served as a Pulitzer Prize juror four times.

Stanley Macdonald
Stan Macdonald worked for more than 30 years at The Courier Journal, where he served as a reporter, city editor, and special projects editor.

Macdonald was directly involved in several stories that won national awards, including the George Polk award and the runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize. After retiring from the newspaper, Macdonald taught writing and journalism courses at Western Kentucky University, St. Lawrence University and Bellarmine University.

Caroline Pieroni
Caroline Pieroni, a former journalist, is an attorney with Dinsmore & Shohl.

Her practice is focused on employment litigation and advice, business litigation and First Amendment and media law. Before she became a lawyer, Pieroni worked as a newspaper reporter at The Courier Journal. She is a graduate of Western Kentucky University and the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville.

Stacie Shain
Stacie Shain is an award-winning communications professional who teaches at Bellarmine University and for Penn State University’s World Campus.

Shain earned her bachelor’s degree from Bellarmine University and her master’s degree from Indiana University. Shain co-authored a book, “Duty, Honor, Applause: America’s Entertainers in World War II.” Shain is on the board of the Louisville Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.
Two substantial grants to LPM, earmarked for an investigative newsroom, helped establish KyCIR in mid-2013. Local businessman Ed Hart donated $250,000 and the Louisville-based C.E. & S. Foundation pledged an additional $600,000. It is KyCIR’s largest donor.

In 2015, the C.E. & S. Foundation pledged an additional $250,000. It is KyCIR’s largest donor.

Our Supporters

We have to diverse a set of financial backers and supporters, including community members, philanthropists and local and national foundations.

Donors have no control over our newsroom, our work or our editorial decisions. We do not accept money from political parties, political action committees, politicians or others whose donation may directly affect our independence or public perception of our operations.

Two substantial grants to LPM, earmarked for an investigative newsroom, helped establish KyCIR in mid-2013. Local businessman Ed Hart donated $250,000 and the Louisville-based C.E. & S. Foundation provided a grant of $190,000.

In 2015, the C.E. & S. Foundation pledged an additional $250,000. It is KyCIR’s largest donor.

KyCIR discloses all donations of any amount. 2018 brought a record number of supporters whose donation may directly affect our independence or public perception of our operations.

“The work done by WFPL and KyCIR is more important than ever! Thank you for all you do.”

— Alison and Ray Smith, Louisville
Every effort was made to accurately list the names of our generous donors. If a correction is required, please let us know.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We do not walk away from stories that need to be told, no matter how resource-intensive. That’s what our community expects. Thank you for making that possible through your support.

Support our work and become a member.
KyCIR.org/donate  |  502-814-6565  |  membership@kycir.org
Send us tips:  502-814-6500  |  investigate@kycir.org  |  619 S. 4th Street  |  Louisville, KY 40202
Visit us at kycir.org and sign up for our newsletter. Let us know what you think and how we can serve you better.
Facebook.com/kentuckycir  |  Twitter: @KentuckyCIR  |  Instagram: @Kentucky_CIR