“I don’t know how you all do it, but I’m so impressed with KyCIR. Thank you!”

— Jeri Swinton, Louisville Public Media member
About Us

The Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting is a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom within 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 original reporting in the public interest. We produce journalism that 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 a necessity. 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.

“The KyCIR team is doing the best investigative work in the state, tackling tough stories and issues that otherwise would go unnoticed. Not only does it reveal wrongdoing, it also gets results.”

— Bennie Ivory, former editor of The Courier-Journal newspaper, KyCIR advisory board member
“Journalism Kentuckians need at a time when you can’t get it anywhere else!”

— John D. Davis, Louisville Public Media supporter

“In the times we are living, organizations like KyCIR are essential for our communities! Great job!”

— José Neil Donis, publisher of Al Día en América
Louisville Public Media board member

“WFPL is the spice that makes Louisville special! And we are really excited about the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting and all the great work it has been doing.”

— Subho Satpathy, sustaining Louisville Public Media member since 2001
A Note From The President

After many years at National Public Radio, American Public Media and Public Radio International, I joined the team at Louisville Public Media in 2016. KyCIR was a key reason.

It is a shining example in the U.S. of public media’s commitment to ambitious, honest, nonpartisan coverage – coverage that asks daily if our public servants are truly serving us. It is coverage that doesn’t stop at problems. It seeks solutions and highlights the people behind them.

This report speaks of the awards KyCIR has won, the extensive reach of its stories through its media partnerships, and the real-world actions spurred by its findings. What I appreciate most, though, are the words of support and trust offered in these pages from those in our community.

As a newcomer to Kentucky, I have been meeting many people. Both those who call themselves liberals and conservatives equally praise the Center’s investigations as important, fair and indifferent to whether someone is affiliated with one party or another. At a time when our nation is divided along many lines, KyCIR connects us around our common interests.

Kentucky has a proud tradition of investigative reporting. KyCIR has taken up that mantle and is using public radio and partnering with TV stations, newspapers and websites around the state to build on that tradition. We don’t intend to be an island of great coverage. We intend to spur a continent of great coverage.

We are building this investigative continent on the bedrock of community support. Thank you for your interest in our work and your support.

Sincerely,

Michael Skoler
President
Louisville Public Media

LOUISVILLE PUBLIC MEDIA
“To fight corruption in Kentucky is no small matter given how pervasive and ingrained it seems to be. I imagine it takes some courage and is not without some level of threat. I hope you all at KyCIR and LPM keep this integrity going and fend off efforts to curtail good investigative reporting.”

— Larry Howe-Kerr, sustaining Louisville Public Media member
A teen’s mysterious death in a detention center. Golden parachutes for university execs. Crooked politicians. Criminal constables. Costly shenanigans at the University of Louisville. We are there for you.

Our newsroom in 2016 garnered another round of marquee national awards. But the best measures of success are impact and meaningful change. And we’re proud that again our reporting spurred legislation, reforms and changes that make Kentucky a better place to live.

This was a year of change for the commonwealth, the country and the media. You’ve seen fake news articles spread faster than real news. You’ve watched facts lose their meaning, dwarfed by sensational sound bites and outright lies.

We feel it, too. And as purveyors of truth, we work hard each day to produce honest and independent investigative journalism.

So when your leaders look to line their pockets and enrich their friends, we’ll cry foul. When your tax money is flitted away, we’ll expose it. When major institutions try to keep public records and information from you — the public — we’ll fight, even if it means a battle in court.

Our mission remains unchanged, and our motivation is stronger than ever. We produced ambitious, hard-hitting journalism in 2016, we’re doing it today, and we’ll do it again tomorrow. We are here for you.

Sincerely,

Brendan McCarthy
Managing Editor
Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting
KyCIR Staff

Brendan McCarthy | Managing Editor

McCarthy is a veteran newspaper and television investigative reporter. He previously worked as a criminal justice reporter in New Orleans.

He was a 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist and won a George Polk Award, a Mike Berger Award and an Emmy, among other honors. He has reported for the Times-Picayune in New Orleans, Chicago Tribune, The Boston Globe and The Philadelphia Inquirer.

R.G. Dunlop | Reporter

Dunlop is a veteran investigative reporter whose work has exposed government corruption and resulted in numerous reforms in Kentucky.

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. He is a three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and was twice a member of teams that won George Polk Awards.

Kate Howard | Reporter

Howard is an investigative reporter specializing in higher education and government accountability. Her work has received a national Investigative Reporters and Editors award and numerous state and regional awards. She previously covered higher education at The Omaha World-Herald. She also reported for The Florida Times-Union and The Tennessean.

Alexandra Kanik | Data Reporter

Kanik brings the numbers to life as data reporter for KyCIR and Louisville Public Media. 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.
Reaching a Wider Audience

Our Total Reach In 2016 Grew By **60%**
Over The Previous Year Across
Several Different Platforms

**ONLINE**

- More than 555,000 pageviews via KyCIR.org and WFPL.org
- 3:28 average time on page – KyCIR.org

**VIA PARTNERS**

- Reached more than 2.3 million via radio
- Reached more than 2.7 million through other print/online outlets

Impressions are defined as the number of people exposed to our stories. We calculated this by factoring in web traffic, average radio listenership and the circulation of publications that ran our work.
Our investigations in 2016 again had impact and the results took many forms. Because of our reporting, a new law mandates that Kentucky’s county jailers be held accountable and provide reports on their work and duties.

In light of our journalism, legislators took up a proposal to examine all in-custody deaths at state correctional facilities and juvenile detention centers. Also in Frankfort, our investigation into executive pay at state colleges and universities sparked a senator to read our work, verbatim, from the Senate floor and demand hearings.

In Lexington, the city council is examining ways to rein in constables’ power, a direct result of our reports.

Our work spurred action across the state. Plans for a multimillion-dollar boondoggle of an environmental project in eastern Kentucky were shelved after our reporting. Law enforcement officials were charged criminally in northern Kentucky. And the University of Louisville was forced to release records and information they had fought to keep hidden from the public.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Kentucky Constables: Untrained And Unaccountable

Our investigation with WAVE 3 News revealed widespread misconduct by county constables. Constables, armed with badges and guns but little to no training, are responsible to no one except a small slice of a county’s voters every four years. Our work prompted legislation, and the Lexington City Council is considering ways to rein in its constables.

Gynnya McMillen’s Death In A Detention Center

The 16-year-old’s death, the first in a juvenile facility since 1999, didn’t initially draw much attention. But we dug in, broke several aspects of the case and shined a spotlight on the circumstances surrounding her death. Our reporting garnered national attention. The state agency later fired several staffers and two were indicted.
Private Probation Industry

We took you inside the wild, woolly and unregulated private probation industry in Kentucky. Private probation companies operate under no contracts with the state, counties or the courts they serve. No one knows who is in charge, and no state agency monitors the probation officers.

Government

The Attorney General’s Investigator And His History Of Lies Under Oath

We documented cases in which a veteran investigator with the state Attorney General’s office lied under oath. The Medicaid fraud investigator had repeatedly been accused of lying to grand juries in order to obtain indictments. He was placed on leave and later fired.

Tim Longmeyer, The Corrupt Politico

Following the former Kentucky Personnel Cabinet head’s bribery indictment, we revealed that politically appointed cabinet employees were devoted Democratic donors. We exposed Tim Longmeyer as a “double-dipper” — on the state payroll while receiving retirement benefits. And we profiled the consulting company at the center of the corruption scheme.

Watchdogging the Election

In the lead-up to the presidential race, KyCIR examined the state’s long, sordid history of vote buying. We later helped monitor the polls, knock down unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud and closely tracked all the donation dollars that went to the presidential race.
EDUCATION

Following the (Hidden) Money

We revealed how U of L’s nonprofit fundraising arm bought an abandoned factory in Oklahoma at the behest of a major donor. The foundation called the whole transaction off when we started reporting on the arrangement.

Another KyCIR investigation uncovered secret deals — worth millions of dollars — that the outgoing university president had made prior to his departure. Later, more investigations revealed major issues in the school’s research program and raised questions about top administrators.

Also, our examination of college endowments in Kentucky found that the biggest colleges invested in exotic, expensive and risky funds — and earned lower than average returns.

Salaries at Kentucky Community & Technical College System

Our continuing stories peeled back layers of questionable and costly decisions by KCTCS. We revealed that the outgoing president — already one of the highest-paid in the country — received an $816,000 buyout amid college declines and cutbacks. Later, we showed how a school consultant relied on bunk data and a flawed methodology in signing off on a major compensation study.

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

University of Louisville Lawsuit

We sued the University of Louisville Foundation over its failure to release basic financial records and ethics disclosure statements. We eventually settled the suit, winning the release of these public records.
Where Our Reporting Appeared

**Newspapers**
- Lexington Herald-Leader
- The Courier-Journal
- The Cincinnati Enquirer
- Louisville Eccentric Observer
- News and Tribune (Jeffersonville, Indiana)
- The Kentucky Standard
- The State-Journal
- Bowling Green Daily News
- The Paducah Sun
- The Daily Independent
- Grant County News
- Appalachian News-Express
- Floyd County Chronicle
- Mt. Sterling Advocate
- The Herald-News
- Hart County News-Herald
- Butler County Banner-Republican
- The Barren County Progress
- The Monroe County Citizen
- Salyersville Independent
- The Carroll County News-Democrat
- The Farmer’s Pride
- The Trimble Banner
- The Lebanon Enterprise
- The News-Enterprise
- Journal-Times
- Al Día en América
- The Louisville Cardinal
- Sapulpa Daily Herald (Sapulpa, Oklahoma)

**Online**
- WCPO (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- Oklahoma Watch
- The River City News
- KyForward
- Northern Kentucky Tribune
- Southern Investigative Reporting Foundation
- West Kentucky Journal
- WAVE 3 News

**Radio**
- 89.3 WFPL News
- WEKU
- WKYU
- WNKU
- WKMS

Our work was cited by numerous other outlets, including The Associated Press, CBS News, Buzzfeed, Gawker, Huffington Post, The Marshall Project, The Root, Vibe and more.
Award-Winning Journalism

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS & EDITORS

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

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”


EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD

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

2017 Regional Award – “The University Of Louisville, A Big Donor And Ownership Of An Abandoned Factory”

2016 Regional Award – “Only In Kentucky: Jailers Without Jails”

2014 National Award – “The Man With Many Chances”

2014 Regional Award – “The Man With Many Chances”

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

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

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

KENTUCKY ASSOCIATED PRESS BROADCASTERS

KyCIR received several honors in the annual state radio journalism contest.
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.

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”

“KyCIR has been doing an excellent job digging into significant issues. The work shows a genuine understanding of important issues and the necessary maturity to make difficult stories understandable. Their work is important. Their results are terrific.”

— Ed Manassah, former publisher of The Courier-Journal
Executive Director, Institute for Media, Culture and Ethics at Bellarmine University,
KyCIR advisory board member

“Exactly the support needed on behalf of the voter / taxpayers.”

— Bob Talley, Louisville Public Media supporter
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
Jason Falls
Bennie L. Ivory
Stanley K. Macdonald

Ed Manassah
Caroline Pieroni
Stacie Shain

We aim to have a diverse 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 $600,000. It is KyCIR’s largest donor.

“My husband and I have enjoyed the addition of Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting. To date, the reporting is thorough, succinct and engaging. Please keep up the good work.”

— Kathryn Wong Rutledge, sustaining Louisville Public Media member since 1994
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Let us know what you think and how we can serve you better.