



islesWORKS
2017 Annual Report



SELF-RELIANT FAMILIES & HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

TRAIN & EDUCATE

BUILD WEALTH

LIVE GREEN AND HEALTHY

REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

ISLES.ORG



Prepare for work and life.



Manage, protect, and grow assets.



Build gardens, parks, & healthy, efficient homes.



Plan and create safe, thriving places.



Message from the President

Dear Friends,

People ask, "Why does Isles do this work, this way?"

Well, over 37(!) years ago, we wanted to find better ways to strengthen communities and restore the environment at the local, "isles" level. Since then, we've searched and tested the best, affordable pathways to our mission: self-reliant families and healthy, sustainable communities.

After nearly 4 decades of trial, error, learning, and shifting political and financial trends (especially this past year), today's Isles provides a unique toolbox for families and communities. In four ways, we foster self-reliance. We plan and develop healthy places, build financial wealth, clean up environmental hazards, and educate and train students and workers.

Our staff, board, and volunteers are social entrepreneurs that work with communities to blend local wisdom with the best thinking and evidence-based data across the country. At times that's a messy process. But it's the best way we know to succeed. The results are highlighted in this Annual Report.

This year, I expanded my teaching load at the Keller Center at Princeton University, and the Isles leadership team of John Hart, Julia Taylor, Shenette Gray, and Peter Rose stepped up to lead on numerous fronts. We expanded our work on the ground. We shared lessons with others across the state and country. We developed webinars, case studies for the classroom, op-eds, and the first draft of Isles' history.

This doing and thinking are possible because of organized people and diverse funds. That includes our volunteer board under Michele Minter's leadership, our awesome staff, and supporters like you, who provide critical flexible funding.

This work is more important than ever, and we can't do it without you.

Thanks for being there! Check out www.isles.org and let us know what you think.

In community,

Marty Johnson





Train & Educate

Over 34% of young adults in Trenton do not graduate high school on time, compared to a statewide rate of 10%. How do we reach them? Isles Youth Institute (IYI) offers an alternative path for disengaged students to earn their diplomas, gain career & leadership skills, and change the course of their lives. IYI enrolled 60 students this past academic year.

For those with high school diplomas, green job training in future-focused energy & environmental fields builds self-reliance and healthy communities. Last year, Isles provided training and education to more than 600 community members, workers, and contractors in lead safe renovation, energy efficiency, and environmental health at our Center for Energy and Environmental Training (CEET).



James, on his first day on the job as a Building Analyst. To date, 1,501 individuals have received certifications through Isles' CEET.

Training Launches Careers

When training manager Andre Thomas first met James at our "Whole House Air Leakage Control Installer" course in 2013, he saw James dive into the work. "He was really motivated, so I invited him to other trainings to help him build his resume," said Andre. Since then, James has earned multiple certifications at CEET, including Building Analyst courses and Community Health Worker training to test Trenton homes for lead. "James came in hungry and took advantage of what we had," Andre shared.

James' dedication paid off. After working temporary jobs and putting in hard hours out in the field, James earned a full-time position as a Building Analyst at Allied Energy Efficiency. Now he's with a company that is giving him the chance grow even further in this in-demand industry.



More Than a Diploma

Self-reliant young adults need more than a high school diploma, job training, or internships. They also need character and life skills development.

That's why civic engagement is so integral to IYI. This year, our students worked with local artist Leon Rainbow to paint a mural at the West Ward Recreation Center as younger kids from the community looked on. Students were proud to contribute this way, commenting, "This makes us feel like leaders. We could spend time on the streets, but we came here and did something positive."

"It's about being a part of something bigger than me and bigger than our youth institute," shared Alexandria, a student at IYI. After earning her diploma, Alexandria continues to work with IYI to set a good example for her three kids. She particularly values volunteering at the local soup kitchen, "There are people in our community who are really in need, especially the homeless during this time of year. I faced some obstacles that could have made me homeless, so to be able to bring my brightness and spark up their day means so much to me."

We're proud to see students grow in leadership and compassion, because we know that it matters—for them, and for our communities.



Build Wealth

For so many, homes are their most vital financial assets. Isles supports families who want to grow or protect their assets by providing first time homebuyer counseling and free foreclosure prevention services.

In addition, Isles Financial Solutions (IFS) offers a financial wellness pathway for low-wage workers. IFS focuses on everyday financial issues like budgeting, credit, savings, and debt to build financial capability. Isles employs intensive individual coaching, credit-building finance, and money management tools to foster positive, long-term behavior change in financial knowledge and decision-making. This year, 328 employees received financial coaching, education, and support services in their workplaces.

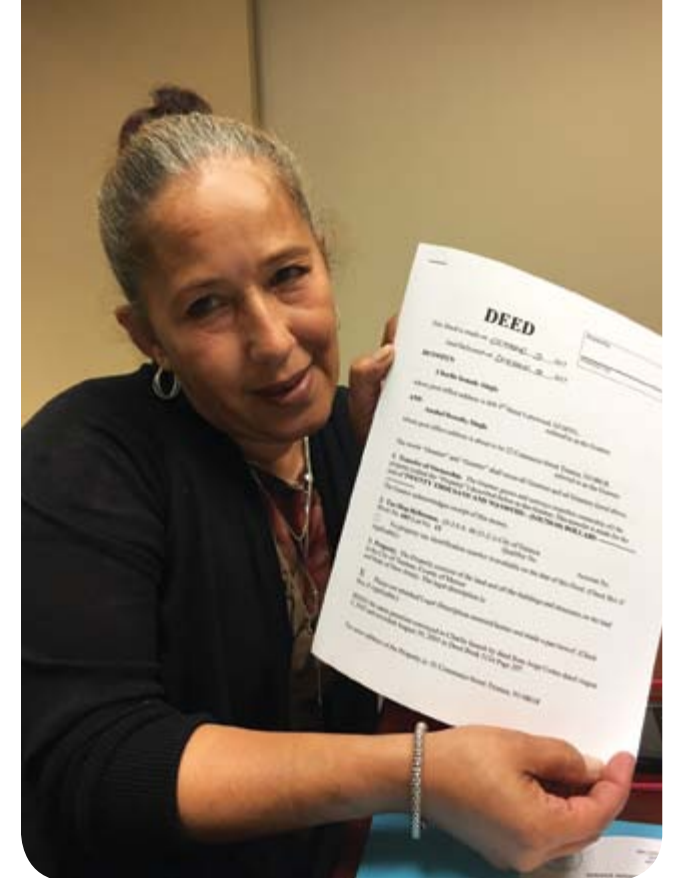
A Home of One's Own

Anabel Rosado has rented all her life. For the past 16 years, she has paid \$750 per month for a small home in the historic Hanover Academy district of Trenton, an area in the process of redevelopment and improvement.

A few years ago, that home was worth less than \$40,000. Today it is rising in value. This fall, her landlord put the house up for sale and offered it to Anabel first. Familiar with Isles, Anabel reached out for help to see if she could possibly purchase the house.

Anabel had some of the money needed to purchase the home and make repairs, but she would need assistance to cover the rest. She worked with an Isles Housing Counselor to create a realistic budget, improve her credit (to be eligible for financing), and prepare for the home purchase and ownership. Within a few months, she obtained financing through Isles' Princeton Federal Credit Union relationship.

Anabel now pays \$430 per month. In 3 years, she will own her home free and clear!



Reap What You Sow

Isles has provided financial education and coaching to Womanspace clients since 2011. When they thought about a hands-on project for their Transitional Housing clients, they asked us for help. Inspired by our city-wide community gardens, Womanspace wanted to build a "Money Garden" to promote healthier food choices, build relationships, and symbolize their financial journey with IFS.

Our financial counselor Elena asked Isles Youth Institute and Urban Agriculture staff to get involved. IYI students

used their construction skills to build sturdy, raised garden beds, and our gardening coordinator Justin provided organic soil and training. The Money Garden's five-part series—preparing soil, planting seeds, watering regularly, weeding, and harvesting—aligned with Elena's financial training.

In late summer, the "money gardeners" reaped their first harvest, celebrating improvements to both their physical and financial health.

"I can't look at these pictures without breaking out in a big ol' ear to ear grin! This is what every community collaboration dreams about—the perfect Coordinated Community Response." –Womanspace thank you letter





Live Green and Healthy

Every year, thousands of New Jersey children are poisoned by lead they ingest, primarily from dust in their own homes. Nearly 50% of Trenton school children have blood lead levels that can affect their IQ, school performance, behavior, and health at tremendous cost to society for special education, crime, and earlier enrollment in Medicaid. Isles' Healthy Homes work finds low-cost ways to test for and remove lead and other environmental hazards. Last year, we tested 300 homes for lead and made over 50 lead-safe and more energy efficient.

Access to healthy food is a challenge in many communities. Trenton has only two supermarkets located within the city to support a population of 84,000+ people, forcing residents (limited by transportation or income) to shop at high-price, high-starch delis and convenience stores. Isles helps residents grow their own food in more than 70 school and community gardens. Urban agriculture saves money, improves food access, builds collaborations between families, and cleans and beautifies vacant land.

Opening Doors

Research is increasingly clear—homes are still poisoning too many people. It's time to clean them up. Doing that requires accessing thousands of homes to test and remediate. For many parents, inviting a stranger into your home can be scary. That is when our Community Health Workers matter most. With strong connections to the community and expertise in healthy homes practices, they reach out to residents and make our work possible.

Esther Fuñez, for example, joined Isles as a Community Health Worker. "I noticed that many people were signing up for Isles' lead tests, but not many were Spanish speakers," she shared. "This is so important for the kids. People need to know what's going on with their water and paint."

That's why Esther took to Facebook with targeted postings that began getting overwhelming responses from the Hispanic community. She translated one of our Healthy Homes presentations into Spanish for about 25 families, and 20 people signed up for assessments on the spot. "Maybe they didn't go to school in their old country or don't read well. That's why I explain things to them in person and help them fill out their applications." For Esther, it's about meeting people where they are, and she's a great addition to our team.



Growing Healthy Habits

Kids' health directly relates to what they put in their bodies and how they move around. This year, Christina and Maddy brought gardening and nutrition education to more than 80 elementary school classrooms across Trenton.

Isles helps schools start gardens, teaches students how to grow vegetables, and trains teachers to connect the gardens to their curricula.

Cooking demos and taste tests are integral to Isles' education. We partnered with national food provider Aramark to bring new flavors to the cafeteria. Christina selects a seasonal vegetable recipe, and Aramark prepares it for school wide taste tests. "The kids get really excited to try new foods now, from sweet butternut squash to cumin roasted broccoli," said Christina, "They vote with stickers and sometimes get swayed by popular opinion. We hope that these kids become adults who know about healthy food, enjoy it, and will advocate for it."

Isles' FoodCorps member Maddy and Community Food Coordinator Christina team up with Aramark to set up a taste test in an elementary school cafeteria.



Revitalize Communities

Isles' planning and development team partners with residents and other stakeholders to identify their vision and priorities, then works with them over time to make positive change happen. The result? Greener, healthier buildings, gardens, and parks. We reclaim community assets and change how residents and visitors perceive them. In 2017, we cleaned and greened nearly 20 acres of parks and vacant lots. We activated these sites with mobile recreation, community events, and public art created by local artists.

Isles also began the process of acquiring and redeveloping vacant properties in the Creative District into new housing and continued developing the new "Social Profit Center at Mill One," a historic former textile mill converted into an innovative 70,000 square foot office, studio, and warehouse facility for social profit organizations, artists, and events. Located on the Northeast corridor train line on the Trenton/Hamilton border, the Center will spur revitalization of the surrounding community. In addition to improving places in the region, Isles also played a leadership role in the Trenton Prevention Policy Board to organize a Youth Violence Prevention Symposium attended by nearly 200 residents, stakeholders, and regional leaders.



Mill One saw more than 400 community partners share in local food, drink, and art at our 2017 Fall Fest.

Do Good. Better.

As more tenants moved into the Social Profit Center at Mill One in 2017, Isles installed a 1,200 sq. ft. cedar roof deck and restored 8,000 sq. ft. of the original steel sash factory windows. HVAC systems, bathrooms, and other improvements prepared the Center for the first major wave of tenants in the mill, which will include 70,000 square feet of office, flex, and event space. The Center is nearly 50% full and taking applications for new social profit tenants.

We showed off the Social Profit Center in October, when 400 people attended Isles Fall Fest at the Mill. In February 2018, we hosted the Wells Fargo Community

Relations Summit, bringing 100 local nonprofits to network, learn from each other, and improve their community-based services to the Trenton region. "This is a glimpse of what's to come as this Center becomes a flexible hub for social impact businesses, nonprofits, and artists," shared Isles President Marty Johnson. "By co-locating here, we expect at least 30 organizations to benefit from higher performing spaces—while deepening their individual and collective impact!"

Interested in sharing this unique space? Contact us at millone@isles.org!



Trenton Arts in Focus

Arts and culture will be key elements to Trenton's revitalization. To realize that vision, Isles released a plan for the downtown Creek to Canal Creative District (C2C), Trenton's first arts and culture district. We worked alongside stakeholders across the city to implement the C2C plan and integrate it into Trenton's Master Plan. In 2017, we helped install public art in four locations within Mill Hill Park. To continue to bring more art into the public realm, Isles is partnering with the I Am Trenton Foundation to plan a new community and arts funding effort. Events supported by these grants will engage local residents and artists and add to the many downtown projects already underway.



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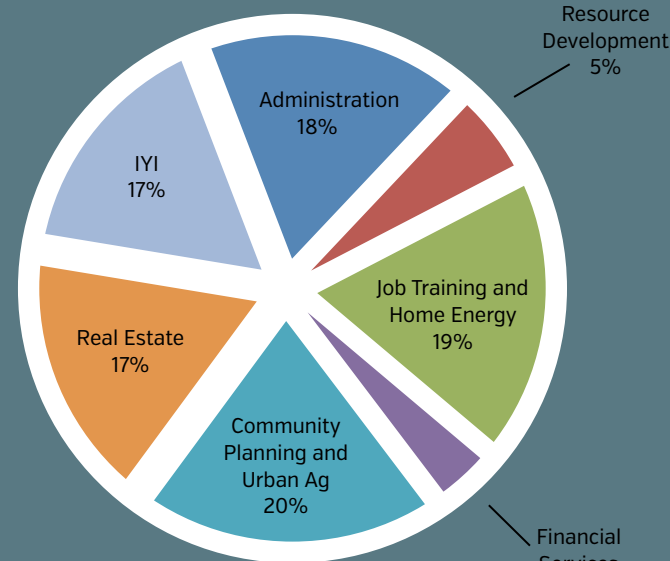
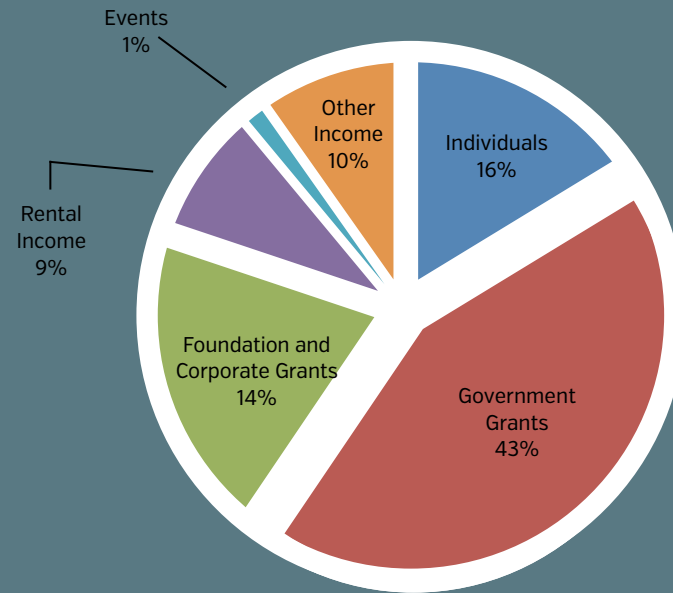
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Financial Summary 2017

2017 Actual Revenue
Total: \$5,436,429



2017 Actual Expenses
Total: \$5,377,054

A complete audited financial statement will be available at our office or at isles.org/about/publications/financials.

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