

# Dear friend,

We sometimes think of change as being made by heroic individuals. But the truth is, real changemakers hardly ever stand alone. Movements aren't just composed of the names we remember. They're built on connections between everyday people—people who together saw something that needed to change, and together took action to change it.

Collective action is core to what we do at ioby. Each campaign we help launch is a small, shared movement of neighbors committed to putting their values into action. Working together on something positive, no matter how small it may seem, creates powerful ties between people. And it's those ties, block by block, community by community, that make up the fabric of our democracy.

In the world of one-year grants and four-year presidencies, it's easy to lose sight of our longer journey. But the work of more than 2,200 local ioby project leaders builds on a proud legacy of organizing for justice. From the church groups that pooled funds to fight to end slavery, to the giving circles that provided community wealth where no banks would lend, to the long march for civil rights that continues to this day, neighbors working together is nothing new. In fact, sustained, energized, collective action is the only way to fulfill our democracy's promise: that we each have a voice, and through that voice, agency to help build a better society.

ioby is humbled to work in this great democratic tradition. We take seriously the work of supporting small-scale, big-impact change; of strengthening our ties, nourishing our movements, and continuing our march.

This report is a chance to celebrate all the incredible work our communities did together this year, and put it in its rightful context of a shared journey. It's the story of the neighborhood, of our democracy, and of getting good done.

Thank you for being part of it,

Erin Barnes Co-Founder and CEO



The ioby team

Positive change grows and builds on itself. That's the story of ioby.



# Seeding democracy, and a movement

How ioby works with emerging civic leaders to grow capacity

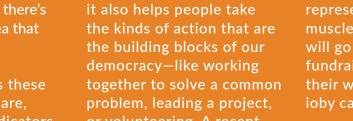
A few hundred dollars in the bank. A new email list. A shovel in the ground. For some ioby projects, it's very easy to see the immediate impact of a fundraising campaign on the community. In fact, these visible "quick wins" are fundamental to our model. We believe positive change doesn't It sets neighbors up for need to be complicated, or take success in the future, and a long time, and that there's great value in the idea that "small is big."

But as important as these small, visible steps are, they can also be indicators

of something even more transformative: a growing movement of positive change. Starting a project and being supported by the community helps build the knowledge, skills, and confidence to step up into a place of civic leadership. problem, leading a project, or volunteering. A recent

survey of 330 successful ioby leaders backs this up.

We found that more than half of the local leaders that ioby serves have never done any type of fundraising before, or are beginner fundraisers. For these leaders, ioby's grassroots fundraising curriculum represents a new civic muscle to flex, and many will go on to incorporate fundraising best practices in their work long after their ioby campaign has ended.





#### **Building blocks of democracy**

There isn't a perfect recipe to ensure our democracy is healthy and strong, but according to the congressionally chartered National Conference on Citizenship's Civic Health Assessment there are a few key elements that create a foundation for it to flourish: leading civic change, working with neighbors on a local solution, belonging to a group or club, volunteering, making a charitable donation, staying informed about key issues, and voting. Communities with a strong culture of these civic actions are more able to adapt to change, fight for their needs, and be active participants in democracy, ioby helps foster unique opportunities to strengthen their civic muscles in four of those areas; working together, volunteering, giving, and leading change.

### After their ioby campaign

of leaders gained new donors and supporters

met with formerly out-of-reach decision ioby also trains leaders in outreach and growing a support base, essential skills for all kinds of movement building. More than 90% of leaders report their campaign brought them new donors and supporters, and half say that more than 60% of their donors were new.

With new skills in building support and fundraising. many leaders report being able to grow their personal

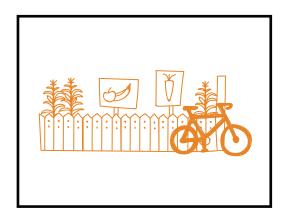
or organizational capacity immediately following their ioby campaign by applying for and receiving new grants (15%); bringing on dedicated fundraising staff (26%); holding meetings with decision makers who felt previously out of reach (19%) or even incorporating as a nonprofit (5%). On a personal level, ioby leaders have reported feeling empowered to take bigger steps into civic life, such as advocating for

systemic changes or even running for office.

It's clear that running a fundraising campaign with ioby is more than a sixweek crash course in online fundraising—for many, it's the key to unlocking a new sense of agency within the community. And it's that agency that transforms neighbors into changemakers.

# Levels of impact

There's so much more to an ioby project than meets the eye. Each project sets out to accomplish a goal—a new bike lane, better access to healthy food, a more active public space—but its impact ripples out far beyond. We've identified four levels of impact that build on each other when neighbors start an ioby project.



#### **Project level**

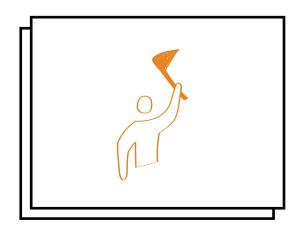
When neighbors crowdfund with ioby, they can tap into the flexible funding they need to make positive civic change no matter who they are. Big or small, their projects have a lasting impact on the community.



#### **Neighborhood level**

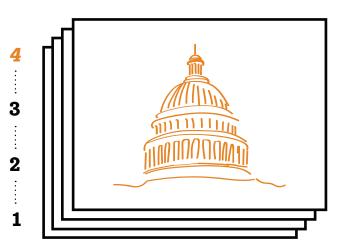
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ioby campaigns raise much more than just money—they also build community support, strengthen connections, and demonstrate that neighbors are invested in their community's future.



#### **Personal level**

Being part of a neighborhood project with ioby is transformative. It shows leaders that what we do individually, and together, actually makes a difference. After leading a project, neighbors are more likely to see themselves as changemakers.



#### **Civic level**

A project usually doesn't just end once it's been built or completed. When neighbors take action to make positive change, and literally invest in their own good ideas, decision makers tend to take note. Civic changemaking becomes a bit more inclusive and responsive.



Neighbors in Cleveland crowdfunded \$4,882 to grow Clevelanders for Public Transit, an all-volunteer riders' association fighting for more equitable transit, with their first part-time staff member.

"Asking for a grant might be a little easier than crowdfunding but you're not really building a base like you are with a mass campaign with lots of small donations."

Chris Stocking, Clevelanders for Public Transit

People & Places

A sense of place is central to who we are and the work we do at ioby. The neighborhoods and communities where we live, work, and play are special—they're full of the people and things that make a place feel like home, and they're often where the interactions that make up our civic life happen. Where we decide that someone's got to do something, where we overcome disagreements and differences, and where we make change.

When neighbors want to make those places stronger, healthier, and more sustainable, they turn to ioby.

Anyone with a great idea anywhere in the country can work with us. We also have cities of focus—currently Detroit,

Memphis, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh—where we work in neighborhoods with long histories of disinvestment, but that are also defined by a culture of residents organizing to get good done where they live.

One of the ways we can make the greatest impact in our places of focus is by having staff on the ground: our City Action Strategists. They're especially tuned into their cities (they've often started their own ioby projects!) and are trusted members of the community. They work to make face-to-face connections, help organize neighbors and doers, and help build connections with civic partners.



Detroit Action Strategist Joe Rashid (left) speaking with neighbors in Detroit's East Warren neighborhood. Our City Action Strategists play a key role in growing our impact in our cities of focus.

**\$380,669** 

**Dollars raised** 

135

Projects Launched 2,250

Neighborhood leaders trained

**MEMPHIS** 

\$958,325

**Dollars raised** 

293

Projects Launched 4,551

Neighborhood leaders trained **CLEVELAND** 

\$632,982

**Dollars raised** 

275

Projects Launched 3,412

Neighborhood leaders trained

**PITTSBURGH** 

\$667,014

**Dollars raised** 

193

Projects Launched 2,961

Neighborhood leaders trained

# By the numbers

**ALL TIME** 

\$7,404,965

**Dollars raised nationwide** 

2,221

Projects Launched 23,998

Neighborhood leaders trained

\$50

Average donation size

## **Projects by type**

26%



#### **Food**

Farmers markets, cooking classes...

770/



**Social Justice** 

Anti-racist trainings, bail support...

12%



**Safer Streets** 

Bike lanes, crosswalks...

**Public Health** 

maternal health...

Active living,

**Public Art** 

Murals, music

**Placemaking** 

festivals...



Neighbors working together

Walk audits, 311 phone banks...

Schools

Theater programs, learning gardens...

Environment

Solar streetlights, anti-plastic campaigns...

\_\_\_ Sha



Timebanks, tool libraries...

2019

\$1,804,980

**Dollars raised nationwide** 

307

Projects Launched 5,136

Neighborhood leaders trained





#### **Matt Kelly**

Kanab, Utah \$28,662 raised

Matt Kelly is a freelance journalist, but he's also a passionate citizen scientist. He was fascinated with the bees at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, where in an area the size of Delaware there are nearly as many unique bee species as there are anywhere east of the Mississippi. But the bees are threatened, not least by the federal government's action to shrink the park in 2018. So he and his team crowdfunded \$28,662 with ioby to study the bees, and chronicle their journey to raise awareness about critical natural habitats.

Pop-up parks, block parties...

<sup>\*</sup>Since many ioby projects fit into more than one category, these designations are not mutually exclusive.

## Who we serve

It's tough to categorize a typical ioby leader. The people we work with are crossing guards, urban farmers, bakers, activists, PTA presidents, bus riders and drivers, teachers, elected officials, and so much more. What they do have in common is a deep love for the neighborhoods they call home, and a readiness to make them even better.

We work with all kinds of people, and all kinds of organizations, to crowdfund and get good done. But we're particularly good at supporting what is traditionally known as the grassroots, as well as what we like to call the deep roots. We think of the grassroots as small organizations, often with paid staff and 501(c)3 status, but with small budgets. They often are focused on community-specific concerns, and are deeply rooted in the neighborhood. For grassroots

organizations, ioby's crowdfunding platform offers a one-stop-shop for donors to give to a specific project. Our coaching offers an additional layer of support and helps small organizations diversify their funding streams with campaigns that also expand their network of supporters.

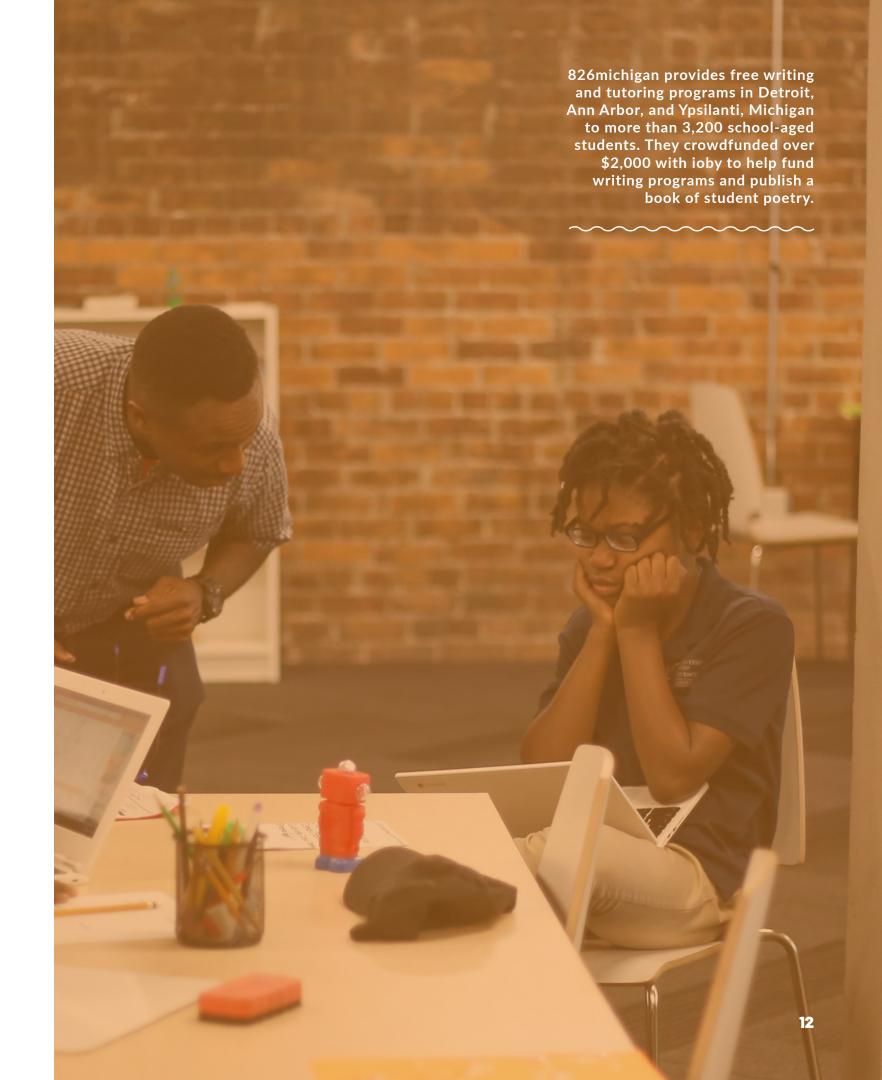
The deep roots are a step deeper—they might be a formal organization, like a neighborhood association or PTA—or they might simply be a group of neighbors with a great idea to make positive change. These groups rarely have paid staff or 501(c)3 status, and usually have very limited sources of income if any. Crowdfunding with ioby finally brings them the resources they need to begin bringing their idea to life—like funding a storm garden or installing a new stop sign. It might

help bring a brand new idea to maturity by funding a pilot project, or even help the group formally incorporate as a nonprofit. Receiving funding from the community through ioby also often helps neighbors tap into more funding, like local government or foundation support.

For both the grassroots and the deep roots, ioby's support can be transformative. It brings them resources they might not otherwise have, and helps nurture and grow their great ideas. Civic actions like rallying neighbors or lobbying for community improvements become second nature, with a boost from ioby.



The Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh crowdfunded \$10,337 to create programming that helps youth from different cultures and geographic areas in Pittsburgh learn together through the common language of the arts.







## Davidica Little Spotted Horse

Pine Ridge Reservation \$1,050 raised

Davidica Little Spotted Horse is clear-eyed about the challenges that her community on the Pine Ridge Reservation faces. "Our county is the second poorest county in the United States. We have an 80% unemployment rate here," she says. "But I totally know that our people and our kids are super resilient and smart. They have hope and an amazing love for the reservation, and for our territory and for our people." So she, her daughters, and her community decided to start the Wa'na Wanhi Lakota Youth Project to create a space for young people struggling with their mental health to heal together, and to strengthen their community along the way.

# We're listening

We recently asked successful ioby leaders what they valued most about ioby. As we grow, we continue to refine our model based on feedback; developing new tools and trainings to meet our community's needs, and reinvesting in the pieces that are proven to work. Here's a bit of what we heard back:

"ioby is good at helping people get started. We learned a ton from our initial contact as to how to set ourselves up to have a successful campaign."

"ioby is good at connecting visionaries with funding opportunities to greatly impact the community and their work."

"ioby is good at guiding people and organizations throughout the fundraising journey."

"ioby is good at connecting like-minded individuals in the community. They also gave me strategies that made crowdfunding seem less daunting."



ENDER STORY

# Shannon Criss, Rachel Jefferson, others

Kansas City, Kansas \$8,734 raised

Residents in Kansas City, Kansas, looked around and saw that walking—a pretty basic activity—was a bit of a challenge in the neighborhood. There were missing sidewalks, big cracks, and uneven surfaces. "Walking in the middle of the street is dangerous, but kids were doing it. Why?" Shannon Criss, one of the project leaders, said. So a group of neighbors, community organizations, and local university members came together to crowdfund \$8,734 for a walk audit that helps them build the case for investment from the local government.

# What makes ioby different?

Before a page even goes live to start collecting donations, a lot of hard work and thought goes into every crowdfunding campaign with ioby. From the idea stage, to crowdfunding, straight through to project implementation, ioby is there to support neighborhood leaders.



#### Fiscal sponsorship

ioby's fiscal sponsorship helps make it easier for grassroots groups to start projects and raise money.

#### **Fundraising strategy**

Leaders work closely with a Success Strategist—their fundraising coach—to build a budget and craft a plan that makes sense for their goals.



#### Resources & guides

Leaders have access to resources, guides, and webinars with successful project leaders and experts in different fields.

#### **Success**

With ioby, neighbors pick up both the money and the support they need to make their projects happen. In our cities of focus, our City Action Strategists offer support and connections to help bring projects to life.



#### **Donations & volunteers**

With ioby's unique platform, leaders collect tax-deductible donations and the volunteer support they need to bring their idea to life.

#### **Step-by-step support**

All along the crowdfunding journey, ioby is there. When leaders run into issues or get stuck, ioby's staff is there to help them get unstuck.



#### Beyond a campaign

With a crowdfunding campaign under their belt, neighbors report more confidence to do another project, and the skills they need to get more involved with civic life.



# The changemaker's toolbox

Sometimes, inviting neighbors to step up and lead a project with you can be a big ask. We get that. But making change, and even swimming against the current when you need to, gets a little easier with folks cheering you on. That's a big part of our job at ioby, and the resources we continue to develop play a big role in that.

With offerings like webinars, toolkits, and other peer-to-peer learning opportunities, neighbors build their organizing chops and get the skills they need to successfully complete their own project. The tips and best practices shared in our resources are often shaped by other successful leaders who step up to pass on their own expertise. It's a unique way to build a knowledge bank and keep the movement going.



## Toolkits: Spotlight on Community Health

Health is about more than doctors and medicine. It's also about access to healthy foods, places to play and exercise, and so much more. But tackling public health at the neighborhood level can feel like a tall order. So in 2019, we reached out to the experts—ioby leaders—and put together a practical guide with in-depth case studies, tactical advice, and much more to help boost health in our neighborhoods.

ioby.org/healthytoolkit



#### **Webinars**

Our webinars are a unique opportunity for neighbors far and wide to interact and learn from one another. Leaders who have successfully crowdfunded get an opportunity to pay it forward and offer advice, and other leaders can ask questions and get practical tips from folks who've been in their shoes. In 2019 we hosted webinars on reusing vacant lots, organizing for gender justice, creative storytelling for fundraising, and more.

ioby.org/webinars



#### Peer-to-peer learning

Our peer-to-peer resources, like the Learn from a Leader series and Recipes for Change, are a library of case studies built from lived experiences. Through these resources, project leaders can lean on a community of experts and learn the skills they need for a successful project.

ioby.org/resources



**Syreeta Gordon** 

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania \$1,493 raised

"All you have to do is Google 'Black maternal health,' and you'll see that too many Black women are dying in childbirth," Syreeta Gordon says, and she's right. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that Black mothers die at a rate 3.3 times higher than white mothers, and of those deaths, three in five are preventable. While there is a broader, systemic crisis at play, Syreeta wanted to jump into action and do what she could to fight for health and justice. She crowdfunded \$1,493 with ioby to begin to train doulas of color to provide access to the learning, resources, and care that Black mothers need for a healthy and safe pregnancy.









# Increasing impact with Match Funds

The leaders we support often do not have access to traditional sources of funding. That's why they turn to their communities, and ioby, for support. With match funds, we are able to provide local leaders with an opportunity to double their local gifts, while leveraging institutional support. In 2019, we partnered with

foundations, corporations, and government agencies to offer hundreds of thousands of dollars in match funding that helped give neighbor-led change a big boost. Match opportunities, offering a \$1 match for every \$1 crowdfunded on ioby, are an effective model for getting funding closer to the ground.

#### **Project-based match: ArtistsLead!**

Project-based match opportunities invest in particular types of solutions to community issues. This year, we launched the ArtistsLead! match opportunity in partnership with ArtPlace America to fund creative solutions led by local artists working together with their communities. Working with a creative placemaking lens and available to artists across the country, this opportunity has supported projects like Plena Cangrejera in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Plena Cangrejera celebrates Plena, a traditional Afro-Puerto Rican musical genre, and the rich history of the Santurce neighborhood amidst rapid gentrification and change.

#### Place-based match: Sustainable CT

Place-based matches help neighbors forge stronger connections with one another rooted in solutions to common issues. Our partnership with Sustainable CT, for instance, doubles donations to community sustainability projects in Connecticut neighborhoods. The match is tied to Sustainable CT's municipal certification program, incentivizing residents to partner with local government to work towards sustainability and is supported by the Smart Seed Fund and the Tremaine Foundation.



Neighbors in Cleveland crowdfunded over \$10,000 to bring 51st annual Puerto Rican Parade and Festival, a city-wide celebration of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Cleveland, to life.

# 2019 Match Fund highlights



#### **Pittsburgh**

We launched a new round of the One Northside Crowdfunding Challenge with the support of the Buhl Foundation and continued the Jefferson Region match with support from the Jefferson Regional Foundation.



#### **Cleveland**

We ran three match opportunities to support neighbors in Cleveland: the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture match (supported by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture), the Racial Equity match (supported by Neighborhood Connections) and the Common Ground match (supported by the Cleveland Foundation).



#### **Memphis**

Our New Century of Soul Challenge, in partnership with the City of Memphis and Shelby County, boosted projects that make permanent physical improvements to neighborhoods—like playground equipment and street furniture.



#### **New York**

We launched new rounds of the Healthy Neighborhoods Challenge, a match opportunity supported by the New York State Health Foundation for projects that boost community health, and the Power Up Neighborhood Match in partnership with Con Edison to support resident-led environment, greenspace, and arts & culture projects.



#### **Kansas**

We continued our partnership with the Kansas Health Foundation to improve community health in eighteen communities across the state with the Healthy Communities Challenge.



ioby's Leader Success Team.

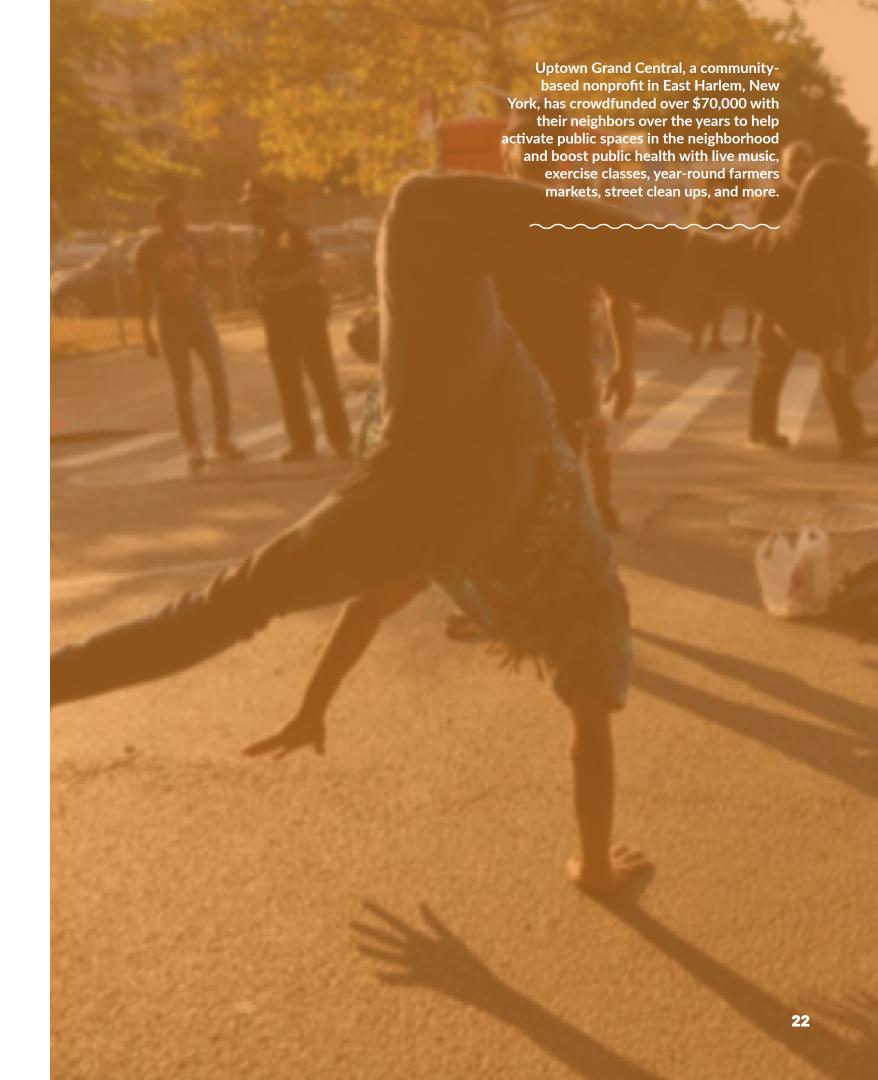
# In your corner

Most people don't wake up in the morning excited to ask friends, family, neighbors, and strangers for money, and one of the top reasons that people who we work with are initially hesitant to fundraise is a fear of making their asks. But fundraising is a skill that, like any other skill, requires practice, attention to known best practices, and expert guidance to learn. That's where ioby's Leader Success Team comes in.

More than just a friendly customer service and support team, ioby's Leader Success Strategists are seasoned experts in grassroots fundraising and movement-building. Together, they've worked with thousands of local leaders, built detailed and realistic budgets, and helped think through countless fundraising activities to raise the money neighbors need to bring their ideas to life.

ioby doesn't believe in a one-size-fits-all approach to fundraising. We know that when each group of neighbors crowdfunds, they bring different experiences, strengths, and needs to the table. So our Success Strategists always start by listening. They learn what the team is bringing to the campaign, and what they are hoping to achieve. Then, they help set a fundraising strategy, and identify where teams may need additional coaching or resources.

Whatever the challenge, the Leader Success Team is available to talk through the strategy, provide key resources as needed, and assist in the execution. It's this personalized approach, moving at the speed of trust, that sets ioby apart from others in the civic crowdfunding space.



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Deputy Managing Director,
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Conservancy

"I've raised over \$55,000 on ioby over the years for various projects, and I know that small is big—that with ten dollars from a neighbor or fifty dollars from a friend, it's possible to make our neighborhoods and cities better. But ioby is also a platform to help us to make our communities stronger, more creative, and to understand each other and our collective needs."

Justin Garrett Moore, ioby Board Member and Executive Director, New York City Public Design Commission

# 2019 Philanthropic support

In 2019, generous support from the individuals, foundations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses listed on the following pages made ioby's work possible. We are incredibly grateful for their dedication to supporting resident-led positive change in communities across the country.

#### Foundations, Nonprofit Organizations, and Businesses

ArtPlace America

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis

**Barr Foundation** 

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

**Bloomberg Philanthropies** 

The Buhl Foundation

Claneil Foundation

The Cleveland Foundation

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ThirdSpace Action Lab

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**Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation** 

**Urban Patch** 

Walton Family Foundation

William Penn Foundation

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Wolffer Estate Vineyard



A Host of People, a Detroit-based ensemble theater company, crowdfunded over \$4,000 to fund a new interdisciplinary performance called Cleopatra Boy to challenge the way that women and other non-straight/white/male leaders' histories are written or erased.

"When I first heard about ioby, I immediately wanted to bring them to Cleveland because I recognized that ioby could fill gaps in funding that institutional philanthropy could not or would not fund. Now I realize ioby does so much more. It gives residents opportunities to follow their passion and deepen their involvement in their neighborhoods and perhaps most importantly, it reminds residents of the important role they play in strengthening communities and our democracy."

John Mitterholzer, Senior Program Officer, The George Gund Foundation

#### Individual donors

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Unitarian Universalist

Congregation of Cleveland

"ioby really restores some of my faith in the possibility of both technology and money. What is money for? Money is a way for communities to invest in their own benefit. And what is technology for? It's for organizing and facilitating that sort of contribution and collaboration. The idea that we can take something like the internet, which is so alienating, so universal, so non-local, and bring it back to real communities of real people and to allow people to work together face-to-face again is finally realizing what this stuff was for."

Douglas Rushkoff, Author and Documentarian: ioby 2019 Summer Party **Honoree** 

## What's next?

#### With your support in 2020, we will:



Reach more potential ioby project leaders through outreach, partnership development, targeted marketing, and a strengthened referral network. This will bring new people into the ioby community, so we can provide tailored support and leadership development to even more local resident leaders.



Launch new resources, including a new webinar series that will include "Fundraising for Change" and "Big Ideas in Civic Leadership" webinars. These programs will dive deep to highlight ioby's core grassroots fundraising curriculum, and go beyond technical skills to also boost neighbors' civic capacity.



Make critical improvements to our technology platform to better support ioby's community of project leaders, donors, and volunteers. This includes incorporating user feedback to improve ioby.org and introducing exciting new features designed to strengthen civic leadership.



Complete our research in eight regions of the Southern United States to learn how we can best support grassroots work in these places.



Support local leaders nationwide, while continuing our focused work with residents in Memphis, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and—new in 2020—Greater Cincinnati!

Together, we can support resident-led change and strengthen civic muscle to make incredible things happen in 2020—in our backyards and beyond!



