If not for the collective voices of trail supporters and advocates over the past half-century, rail-trails around the country would never have come into existence.

Since 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has served as the national voice for the rail-trail movement, elevating the hard work of these supporters and advocates to Congress, public leaders and influencers across America. We have set the precedent that rail-trails are need-to-have community assets and have established the policies that ensure these trails are built. With more than 2,000 rail-trails and more than 32,000 miles of multiuse trails on the ground nationwide, RTC’s focus is on linking these corridors—creating trail networks that connect people and places and transforming communities all across the country.

Explore the difference we've made.

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Cover photo: New Santa Fe Regional Trail in Colorado | Photo by Scott Stark
This page: Down East Sunrise Trail in Maine | Photo by Katie Guerin
Since 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has served as the national voice for the rail-trail movement. As the country’s largest trails organization, it’s our job to speak up for trails, showcasing the incredible impact that trails have on strengthening and transforming communities, and elevating the passionate work of trail supporters and advocates.

To realize the potential that trails offer, RTC has a three-part strategy for change, focused on: changing infrastructure to build the connected systems that maximize the benefits of trails; changing policy to encourage investment in trails and active transportation; and changing behavior to increase awareness and use of trails, so that trails, walking and biking become part of people’s daily lives.

### EXPLORE THE DIFFERENCE WE’VE MADE

A snapshot of RTC’s work in 2017 to ensure trails are at the heart of healthy, thriving communities.

**Changes in Infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles of completed rail-trails across the country</th>
<th>Miles of TrailNation™ trails built to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23,000+</td>
<td>3,472+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rail-trails completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,075+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Money Spent**

- $1.3 Million to date in grants awarded to communities nationally
- $116 Million for trails, walking and biking through the federal TIGER Program
- $835 Million in protected Transportation Alternatives funds in FY 2017 through the FAST Act
- $341 Million passed in new recurring and one-time funds for trails in state legislatures

**Organizations Engaged**

352

**Trail Nation Network Projects**

- Bay Area Trails Collaborative
- Baltimore Greenway Trails Coalition
- The Circuit Trails
- Capital Trails Coalition
- Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Plan
- Route of the Badger
- Miami LOOP

**Visits**

- 64 Congressional Visits
- 7 Million+ TrailLink.com visitors
- 3,472+ Miles of TrailNation™ trails built to date
- 352 Organizations engaged
- 4.2 Million+ TrailLink maps viewed
- 8 TrailNation Network Projects
- $341 Million passed in new recurring and one-time funds for trails in state legislatures
- 1 Million+ railstotrails.org visitors
- 228,000 TrailBlog visitors

railstotrails.org | @railstotrails
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) demonstrates how trails are central to strong communities, creating a healthier, vibrant future for America. And we’re establishing the policies and practices that ensure trails are creating the most powerful connections possible.

We advocate—on Capitol Hill and to state legislatures and local governments—for investments and policies that support safe trail, walking and bicycling networks for people of every age and ability.

We mobilize trail supporters and the public to advocate in their own communities for safe walking and biking infrastructure.

We partner with nationally respected organizations; federal, state and local agencies; public leaders; and trail advocates to build trails and educate Americans on their value.

We raise funds to help create regional trail networks that create and connect healthy, thriving communities and raise the quality of life for Americans.

We provide resources in the form of trail planning, capacity-building grants, technical support and best practices for rural, suburban and urban communities seeking to build trails and connect trail systems.

We speak out about the transformative power of trails, encouraging their use and generating demand for trails nationwide.
**We make the case.** We tell the story of the impact that trails have on our communities—strengthening our transportation systems, our local and regional economies, our health and our environment.

**We create national models.** Through our TrailNation™ program, we collaborate with a diverse cohort of people from across the country to develop and showcase trail networks, highlighting their important role in communities.

**We increase demand for safe places to walk and bike.** Transportation. Recreation. Fitness. Tourism. We develop resources and tools that will connect more people—particularly in underserved areas—to these vital assets.

**We measure our progress.** We set standards for building and connecting trails in ways that unite communities, and establish benchmarks to systematically measure (and then communicate) the impact of these efforts.

**We build the movement.** We do this by building a broad-based network of partners, growing political and public will to prioritize trails, and activating people across the United States to use and support them.
With more than 2,000 rail-trails and 1,700 other multiuse trails nationwide, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC’s) focus is on linking these corridors—creating trail networks that connect people and places across the country. We continue to witness and pay testament to the many ways trails transform communities: strengthening economies, increasing mobility, creating balanced transportation choices, promoting health and protecting our environment.

As we forge ahead, our eyes are fixed on connecting America’s walking and biking infrastructure, and ensuring trails are at the heart of healthy, thriving communities nationwide.

RTC’s three-year strategic plan guides our work toward that vision, with five goals to anchor our efforts.

1. Creating Models of Success
   In partnership with local organizations and communities, RTC will create and advance a vibrant portfolio of nationally significant trail system projects through our TrailNation™ program—to demonstrate what is possible in all types of places when 21st-century trail networks are central to our lives.

2. Advancing Innovative Trail and Active Transportation Policy
   Securing an increased and sustained investment in public funding to support trails and active transportation will require creativity. RTC is leading the pursuit of federal, state and local policies and funding streams that can advance the creation of regional trail/active transportation systems.

3. Increasing Demand for Trails by Encouraging Trail Use
   It is not enough to build trails and hope that people will come. RTC provides resources and public education—including TrailLink.com, the most comprehensive database of rail-trails and multiuse trails in the country—to encourage people to make trails part of their daily lives.

4. Expanding Reach and Encouraging Replication
   Our vision will be realized with leadership from communities across the country, as we use our national platform and influence to showcase and encourage the replication of successful projects and policies nationwide.

5. Building the Backbone by Strengthening RTC
   RTC is a national leader in the trails and active transportation movement. It is imperative that we invest in the strength and sustainability of the organization, including our commitment to ensuring diversity and equity in all facets of our work.
Connecting a Trail Nation

Over the past three decades, RTC has recorded the impact of rail-trails in all 50 states, noting hundreds of successful examples that have helped bring incredible value to neighborhoods and entire regions while becoming part of the fabric of American life. As we move forward with our strategic vision, we are creating real-life models that demonstrate the comprehensive benefits trails bring to communities.

In eight diverse places across the country, RTC is invested in digging in with hundreds of partners to make trail networks happen. These TrailNation projects are incredibly unique—ranging in focus from active transportation to tourism and equitable development, and in size, from 35 miles to 2,700 miles across the American landscape. However, each project shares a common goal: to prove the potential of trails in delivering significant outcomes, and to serve as a replicable model for trail networks nationwide.

Redefining Transportation in the Age of Connectivity

Everywhere, the opportunity exists to bring connected trail systems to the forefront—especially as changing expectations about mobility and rapid technological developments in transportation are forcing new conversations about the future of mobility and the built environment.

For the first time in more than 70 years, our country is at the dawn of a transportation revolution. The emergence of new technologies and business models, such as the autonomous vehicle and the “sharing economy,” will transform how we get around. At RTC, we are calling this new transportation era the Age of Connectivity, both for its genesis in technology and its potential to reconnect people and places. This is a time when trails—our greatest connectors—can work hand in hand with innovation to help redesign our neighborhoods and our public spaces.

Across RTC’s primary areas of work—in public policy, trail building and trail use—we’re challenging the norms and exploring ways to put people-powered mobility front and center as our roadways are reimagined in the context of new technology. As the only national active transportation organization with a deep history in repurposing infrastructure—we built the legal parameters to allow for rail corridors to be repurposed as trails, and the policy framework to drive positive community outcomes—we’re engaging with partners in diverse sectors to advocate for trails as critical elements of new road and community design, with a focus on how we promote safety and build infrastructure that encourages walking and biking as central to our lives.
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC’s) policy work aims to double the amount of money allocated to trails and active transportation infrastructure through federal, state and local funding programs. RTC has specifically designated state legislatures as a primary growth area in which to target these efforts, with a focus on diversifying the funding mix for trails and creating more opportunity to build and connect trail systems in every U.S. community.

Defending and Growing Federal Support for Trails

An Active Transportation Agenda for the New Administration

RTC is the lead organizer for the Partnership for Active Transportation, a unique collaborative dedicated to securing greater federal investment in safe trail, walking and bicycling networks for all Americans.

In November 2016, the Partnership presented its “Active Transportation Agenda for the Trump Administration,” which urges America’s leaders to enact policies that encourage investment in balanced transportation systems that: connect people to important destinations, fuel economic development, reduce health-care costs and meet the needs of people who don’t drive, including low-income individuals, people living with disabilities, seniors and children.

Protecting Dedicated Trail Funding

In FY 2017, RTC quickly mobilized to help protect Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding after a House amendment was passed that aimed to eliminate a requirement that states fairly allocate program cuts when giving back unused federal transportation funds. RTC educated Congress on the amendment’s potentially disastrous consequences for trails with a goal to ensure its elimination in any future budget bill. Ultimately, the omnibus spending bill, passed on March 23, 2018, did not contain rescissions, or this amendment.

Recreational Trails Program

In 2017, we made important strides to grow the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Funded by a portion ($85 million) of the total gas tax paid by off-road recreational vehicles ($272 million), the program has provided over $1 billion to support the creation of more than 21,358 nonmotorized and motorized trail projects to date.

The Coalition for Recreational Trails—including motorized and nonmotorized trail user groups co-chaired by RTC—collaborated on a policy platform in 2017 asking Congress to increase funding for RTP to the full share of the gas tax revenue, which is currently at $272 million, ultimately tripling the investment in recreational trails.
Since 1992, RTC has helped advocate for more than $15.6 billion in funds to support more than 54,000 trail and active transportation projects nationwide through America’s largest federal programs dedicated to trails, walking and biking.
RTC is doubling down on advocacy in collaboration with local partners all over the country in an effort to help states successfully pass innovative new funding programs for trails. This year, we supported initiatives in California, New York, Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, Tennessee and Utah.

$338 Million in state funding secured to build trails

$103 Million in new annual recurring state funds (California, Utah)

$235.5 Million in new one-time state funds (New York, Florida, Minnesota)

More State Money for Trails

CALIFORNIA
$1 Billion for Trails in the Golden State

RTC’s long-standing efforts to ensure robust funding for trails in California culminated in record levels of investment this past year for the state’s Active Transportation Program (ATP)—to the tune of $1 billion ($100 million per year for 10 years). The innovative funding program was established in 2013 through efforts by RTC and the California Active Transportation Coalition.

This win for trails will help achieve a number of long-term goals in California—including creating safer mobility options for bicyclists and pedestrians and improving public health, particularly in underserved communities.

In the fall, the state allocated an estimated $63 million for 23 trail projects chosen in part for their ability to serve disadvantaged areas and address California’s ambitious greenhouse-gas reduction targets. Of that amount, $10.7 million will go to four trail projects in the San Francisco Bay Area, where RTC is working to develop a 2,700-mile trail network through the Bay Area Trails Collaborative, an RTC TrailNation™ project.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/bayarea

CALIFORNIA
$500 Million for Santa Cruz Trails

In November 2016, Santa Cruz County voted to establish a first-of-its-kind local fund, generated by a 30-year sales tax and totaling roughly $500 million, to support regional transportation and active transportation improvements. A result of advocacy efforts by RTC and partners, including the Coastal Trail Working Group, the fund specifically allocates $85 million toward completion of the Santa Cruz Coastal Rail Trail, the main spine of the 50-mile Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network, which, when complete, will travel within 1 mile of 44 schools, 92 parks and 50 percent of the county’s 260,000 residents.

FLORIDA
Sunshine State Approves $43 Million for Trail Development

Advocacy efforts in Florida helped secure $43 million for trails in the state budget, which includes: $26.7 million for the SUN Trail Network (FY 2017–2018); $2.5 million in annual spending authority for the Recreational Trails Program; and $13.5 million in individual investments for key projects in the developing 225-mile Miami LOOP, an RTC TrailNation project. When complete, the Miami LOOP will link world-renowned beaches and tourist attractions as well as two national parks—improving walking and biking mobility for millions of residents and visitors.
ADVOCATING FOR AMERICA’S TRAILS

MINNESOTA
Major Legislative Victory Means Millions for Trails
Advocacy efforts by RTC and partners, including the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota and the American Heart Association’s Minnesotans for Healthy Kids Coalition, resulted in the passing of a transportation bill and a bonding bill that will accelerate active transportation infrastructure development and help create safer mobility options for millions of residents. Included are the creation of a statewide active-transportation program that—like California’s ATP program—could serve as a model for other states; $1 million for Safe Routes to School projects; and nearly $20 million for trail projects throughout Minnesota.

OHIO
Legislative Caucus, Ohio’s Year of the Trails
In an effort to increase public investment in trail networks throughout Ohio, RTC began a coordinated effort with the Ohio Trails Partnership to generate support in the state legislature. These efforts culminated in spring 2017 with the creation of the Ohio Legislative Trails Caucus—an innovative, bipartisan group of state-elected officials that will ensure trails, walking and biking have a prominent seat at the table in future infrastructure plans. RTC was also instrumental in formal actions by both the House and Senate to designate 2017/2018 as the “Year of the Trails”—paying tribute to Ohio’s 1,635+ miles of multiuse trails and their statewide impact.

MARYLAND
RTC successfully advocated for the Maryland Department of Transportation to develop a multiyear funding report for trails—and participated in a task force to explore bike safety and advance trail funding at the state level.

TENNESSEE
A statewide poll commissioned by RTC and Bike Walk Tennessee proved that residents support funding for trails, walking and biking—and helped ensure a gas tax increase passed in 2017 did not exclude funding for these critical projects.

Rallying for an Epic Trail in Missouri
RTC partnered with Missouri Rock Island Trail, Inc. (MORIT) and the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation in 2017 for a statewide mobilization effort to support the developing 144-mile Rock Island Trail project (Windsor to Beaufort). RTC has been actively working with our partners in Missouri since 2014 to help secure the corridor for trail transformation and support the development of other trail segments that—along with the 237.7-mile Katy Trail—could form a seamless 450-mile destination trail network between Kansas City and St. Louis.

Thousands of comments from Missouri residents in favor of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity were collected in the summer and fall and submitted to the state, which is discussing whether to railbank the corridor—with a decision due to the Surface Transportation Board in February 2019. To further support the effort, hundreds of residents and public leaders gathered outside the state Capitol in August 2017 for a rally led by RTC and local partners to highlight the Rock Island Trail’s potential to spur tourism, business opportunities and recreation for the 23 communities along the corridor.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/rock-island-line
At Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, we believe that communities are healthier and happier when trail networks are central to their design.

TrailNation™ brings to life our vision of trails at the heart of healthy, thriving communities from coast to coast.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC’s) vision of a nationwide network of trails has grown clearer with each new mile of trail opened. Our eyes are fixed on interconnected trail networks and the transformative benefits they bring to communities: expanding transportation options, fueling strong businesses and economies, promoting social equity, protecting the environment and improving health and wellness.

Through our TrailNation initiative, we are targeting places diverse in their geography, culture, size and scope, and working with hundreds of partners to turn vision into reality. By the end of 2016, our portfolio included six regional projects—and this past year, we welcomed two new stars: a 428-mile trail network in Texas’ Lower Rio Grande Valley; and a 225-mile project in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Totaling 6,775 miles, and spanning hundreds of communities in 11 states and our nation’s capital, these projects will serve as replicable models that help catalyze the development of trail networks nationwide.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/TrailNation

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY ACTIVE PLAN
Cameron County | Texas

In FY 2017, we solidified our partnership to help implement the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Plan, or “Active Plan,” a 428-mile trail network vision created by The Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHHealth) School of Public Health in Brownsville and 11 communities in Cameron County.

A major goal of the Active Plan is to create equitable access to safe transportation corridors in some of Texas’ most disadvantaged communities and open up new opportunities for physical activity. The plan also aims to establish the region as an international outdoor active-tourism destination, with a goal of supporting job creation and small business activity that injects money into local economies.

In 2017, RTC focused its efforts on securing new private and public funding streams to support the build-out of the network, beginning with six catalyst projects that have an estimated economic impact of $56 million in the construction phase and the potential to generate $367 million in out-of-town-visitor spending in the first 10 years.
THE MIAMI LOOP
Miami-Dade County | Florida

As one of the founding members of the Miami-Dade Trail Alliance, RTC has been working with The Miami Foundation and more than 20 local organizations to finalize a vision for the Miami LOOP—a 225-mile trail network that will have a significant impact on transportation, mobility, economic development, the environment, and health and wellness across Miami-Dade, the state’s most populated county. When complete, the Miami LOOP will improve mobility for millions of people, combat the area’s high bicyclist and pedestrian fatality rates and provide first-mile/last-mile connections for light rail and other modes.

In 2017, the Alliance partners finalized the route, approximately 54 percent complete, which comprises 12 major trail corridors that stretch around Miami and into Broward and Monroe counties. RTC also helped successfully advocate for $13.5 million in state earmarks that will largely support three projects—The Underline (M-Path) (10 miles), the Ludlam Trail (6.2 miles) and the Biscayne–Everglades Greenway (43 miles)—that serve as important connectors for transit routes, schools, parks and water district canals. The year also saw Miami-Dade County’s share of SUN Trail funding grow to $14 million.

THE CIRCUIT TRAILS
Philadelphia Metro Region | Pennsylvania, New Jersey

RTC serves on the steering committee for the Circuit Trails, a project that will encompass 800+ miles of connected trails across nine counties in Greater Philadelphia and New Jersey. When the project is complete—40 percent (325 miles) of the network is open already—more than half the region’s population will live within a mile of the Circuit Trails.

In 2017, RTC continued to work closely with the coalition to raise the Circuit Trails’ prominence in an effort to leverage local support to ensure that Circuit Trails are prioritized for public investment. RTC’s Circuit team supported coalition efforts to secure unanimous county and municipal commitment to do their part in building 500 miles of trails within the project footprint by 2025; led the charge in partnering with trail managers to launch the first Circuit Trails wayfinding signage, increasing the visibility of the system and unifying the brand; and organized a multichannel advertising campaign that reached millions throughout the region.
The Bay Area Trails Collaborative, chaired by RTC and comprising more than 40 partners, is spearheading the development of a 2,700-mile-plus trail network that will connect nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area and serve more than 7 million people—and our network is already 58 percent complete.

In FY 2017, RTC led efforts to map the trail network, including identifying key trail gaps and leveraging the data to illustrate how the network will improve connectivity to schools, transit and jobs—particularly in low-income communities.

We also helped successfully advocate for hundreds of millions of dollars for trails through the state’s Active Transportation program—and are actively involved in the rollout of these funds to ensure they support critical projects throughout the trail network footprint.

RTC is leading the Route of the Badger Coalition in partnership with the Wisconsin Bike Fed in an effort to connect 500+ miles of trails across seven counties in southeast Wisconsin. The transformational project—of which 340 miles are already complete—will create increased opportunities for physical activity, tourism, connections to nature, recreation and stronger businesses along the route.

To build regional momentum for the project, the partners continue to develop relationships with many different stakeholders, including local governments, trail managers, biking groups, friends groups, nonprofits and the public. Three formal working groups were established in FY 2017 to: identify trail gaps, determine which gaps would add the highest value if filled, and develop strategies for completing the network.

Utilizing its customizable BikeAble™ tool to analyze community connectivity, RTC also implemented a study that found that two trail projects—one planned along the 30th Street Corridor and another to extend the Kinnickinnic River Trail—could improve biking access significantly, from 8 percent to 66 percent, in the city’s underserved neighborhoods, creating new access to trails for more than 175,000 people.
INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND TRAILS COALITION  
Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New York

Through the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC), RTC is collaborating with the National Park Service, Pennsylvania Environmental Council and more than 100 organizations to develop a 1,500-miles-plus trail system in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York that will help establish the region as a premier biking and outdoor tourism destination and revitalize small towns along the route.

In FY 2017, RTC applied our technical expertise through a study of select trails within the IHTC footprint—including in Morgantown, West Virginia, and Northeast Ohio—to demonstrate the millions of dollars in economic development and small business investment that have been generated by local pathways since their development. RTC also began a comprehensive feasibility study for gap closures within the Parkersburg to Pittsburgh corridor, a key spine of the network that would connect and serve as a game changer for dozens of small Appalachian towns along a 238-mile route between West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania.

Baltimore Greenway Trails Coalition  
Baltimore City | Maryland

With RTC’s leadership, the Baltimore Greenway Trails Coalition has been working to complete a 35-mile trail system in the city, with social equity as a primary focus. Through the project, we seek to reverse the urban fragmentation and isolation from transit, trails and greenways that has restricted access and mobility in many neighborhoods since the 1950s and 1960s. The trail network will connect 60 neighborhoods in Baltimore to the downtown core, opening up access to walking and biking infrastructure for hundreds of thousands of residents, 1 in 3 of whom currently don’t have access to a car.

Twenty-five miles are already completed, and current work involves developing conceptual designs for the remaining key gaps, with a focus in FY 2017 on two Olmsted-designed corridors along Gwynns Falls Parkway and East 33rd Street. In 2017, RTC also expanded its Baltimore Field Office to increase grassroots engagement and bring new partners and elected officials on board. RTC is working with a pro bono consulting group to develop a branding and marketing strategy for the trail network that is expected to launch in 2018.

Capital Trails Coalition  
Metropolitan Washington, D.C.

The Capital Trails Coalition (CTC), led by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, RTC and the National Park Service, envisions 686 miles of interconnected multiuse trails throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. This extensive trail system will not only serve the area’s 6 million residents and 20 million annual visitors, but will also serve as a shining example for other cities seeking to improve the way people live, play and get around in their own communities.

RTC worked with more than 30 partners to begin efforts to define the CTC trail network and develop an online map and app for use by the coalition. The trail network is 59 percent complete, with approximately 285 miles of planned trail projects that will help ensure equitable access to trails throughout the region. RTC staff are providing ongoing support and guidance to the CTC steering committee and working groups, focused on analytics, public engagement, equity and funding, to move the project forward.

Metropolitan Branch Trail in Washington, D.C. | Photo by Richard Anderson
Building stronger, healthier, more connected communities is at the heart of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s work.

Supporting Our Trail Communities

Through our various pass-through grant programs, we assist communities seeking to get their trail projects off the ground in completing hard-to-fund elements and building capacity that will help make their trail systems true community gems and vital assets in their regions. In FY 2017, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) supported trail-building efforts for 34 projects across the United States that covered all aspects of trail development, from closing critical gaps in trail systems to engaging new trail users and promoting the economic and environmental impact of local pathways.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/doppeltfund

Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund

Since 2015, the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund has made it possible for RTC to award more than $350,000 in grants to trail organizations, local municipalities and nonprofits seeking to improve and complete multiuse trails in their communities. The program provides critical project transformation (trail building) support—for example, construction, maintenance, land acquisition, signage, bathrooms, etc.—as well as support for community outreach and capacity building.

In 2017, we received more than 200 grant applications totaling nearly $6 million in requested funds, demonstrating the high demand for trails nationally. We were pleased to award $102,500 in grant funding to six impactful projects in Colorado, Nebraska, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Wyoming.

FedEx Grant Program

In 2017, RTC launched the FedEx Grant Program to support community-based organizations and municipal agencies who are working to build and promote trails and safe walking and biking routes in the footprint of our regional TrailNation™ projects (see pages 10–13). By completing and promoting these vital pathways, our partners are contributing to the increased mobility, health, environmental sustainability and economic vitality generated by these interconnected trail systems for millions of people annually.

With generous support from FedEx, we provided a total of $60,000 for six capacity-building projects in Wisconsin, Ohio, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania and California aimed at improving trail access, encouraging active living through trail use and fostering community-based trail stewardship.

Metropolitan Grants Program

Since 2008, our Metropolitan Grants Program—a partnership between RTC and The Coca-Cola Foundation—has supported exemplary trail organizations working to improve trail access and encouraging active living through trail use and stewardship in their communities. This fund has been an essential program for integrating trails into the fabric of some of the most urban areas across the country.

Under the program, more than 75 nonprofit organizations and public agencies in 22 urban areas in the United States have received approximately $870,000 in funds for projects impacting 2.5 million people.

In 2017, RTC awarded $129,000 to 22 projects in Florida, Ohio, Maryland, Washington, D.C., New Jersey and California, ranging from trail development and enhancement projects to community support grants that help young people and adults connect with their local trails and neighborhoods.
SUPPORTING AMERICA’S TRAIL BUILDERS

$291,500 awarded to 34 trail projects in 2017

$1,280,000 awarded to trail projects since 2008

Funds awarded to projects in 15+ states and regions in 2017

In 2017, RTC engaged nearly 6,000 trail managers, operators and friends groups, who benefit from monthly networking and technical assistance as members of our national Trail Expert Network (TEN). Learn more: railstotrails.org/TEN.
Thank you, Trailblazers!

Our Trailblazer Society (TBS) plays a transformational role in the growth of America’s trail networks. These Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) members provide leadership donations of $1,000 or more annually, creating a powerful pool of funding for our mission-guided work.

In July 2017, we were pleased to have 12 members join RTC President Keith Laughlin for a five-day excursion on the legendary Great Allegheny Passage in Pennsylvania and Maryland. We also got to know some of our Trailblazer connections from across the country during special rides in California, Virginia and Illinois. Thanks for supporting America’s trails!

Learn more: railstotrails.org/Trailblazer-Society

Photos by Ben Carter, courtesy Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the only national organization in America solely committed to defending the preservation of former railroad corridors for continued public use.

In the past 32 years, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) has helped shape the legal framework around rail-trails and has participated in more than 70 cases in an effort to protect and advance rail-trail development in the United States. Below are some recent highlights from RTC’s legal program, headed by General Counsel Andrea Ferster.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/legal

**Safeguarding the Full Width of Rail-Trail Corridors**

In December 2016, RTC filed an amicus (“friend of the court”) brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *Hornish, et al. v. King County*, involving the East Lake Sammamish Trail, a 12-mile rail-trail in northwest Washington. Adjacent landowners argued that the trail manager (King County) had unlawfully usurped the right to use portions of the corridor width in excess of the trail width itself. RTC’s brief argued that the preservation of the entire width of the rail corridor for the public is essential for protecting the trail experience and preserving the corridor for future rail service.

In a related case, *Kaseburg et al. v. King County, et al.*, RTC filed an amicus brief with the Ninth Circuit in April 2017 to defend the rights of trail managers to use the full width, as well as subsurface and aerial space, of the Eastside Rail Corridor—which runs nearly 20 miles through Seattle’s eastern suburbs—for compatible utility and transit uses. Both cases will be argued before the court in June 2018.

**Defending New Jersey’s Potential “High Line”**

New Jersey’s Harsimus Stem Embankment, an elevated former rail line in Jersey City, has the potential to be a stunning and impactful rail-trail similar to New York City’s famed High Line across the Hudson River. The long-disused railroad corridor stands 27 feet high and spans six blocks. Conrail sold the historical stone edifice in 2005 to a private developer who intended to demolish the structure; however, the railroad did not seek appropriate permission from the Surface Transportation Board (STB)—the federal regulatory agency for railroads—to abandon the rail line prior to the sale. RTC was instrumental in protecting the structure, successfully challenging the sale, and in 2009, Conrail initiated abandonment proceedings with the STB—potentially positioning the corridor for future railbanking. In 2017, RTC, Jersey City and a coalition of trail advocates continued to play a lead role in the abandonment proceedings and related historic preservation reviews to protect this historic public asset and potential rail-trail.
Quantifying the Benefits of Trail Connectivity

Understanding how to build great trails drives Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC’s) research and trail development team on a daily basis. In FY 2017, we pursued projects that advanced our ability to quantify the benefits of trails, from community connectivity to public health and economic impact.

With a focus on learning what makes great trails successful and creating the tools to replicate those successes, RTC has developed a first-of-its-kind suite of research and analytics tools—including online geographic information system (GIS) modeling tools, economic impact surveys, trail count programs and forecasting tools—that are redefining how we think about trails.

In 2017, these tools provided trail builders with critical data to help make the case for meaningful trail projects that can improve the quality of life in their communities.

Empowering America’s Communities

The objective of our research program is to conduct original research that advances RTC’s (and the broader movement’s) understanding of trail networks and their overall effects on communities, including: connectivity, health, equity, environmental sustainability and economic outcomes. Putting this research into practice means empowering communities to build the trail networks that will provide the greatest net benefit over time.

This empowerment can take many forms, and in FY 2017, we engaged in a variety of activities to move the dial forward, including conducting webinars, building cost-estimation tools, and studying value-capture financial models to discern how to make the case for trail network building to local officials as well as potential financers who see the intrinsic net fiscal benefit of trails to communities.
Reconnecting Neighborhoods of Inequality in Milwaukee

When destinations are thoughtfully selected to support community values such as health, wellness or prosperity—BikeAble™ is a groundbreaking connectivity analysis tool that helps planners and officials plan their land use patterns and transportation networks to provide people with greater access to such opportunities.

In Milwaukee, as part of RTC’s TrailNation™ Route of the Badger initiative, the RTC research team applied BikeAble to assess the ability of disadvantaged communities to access trails via walking and bicycling short distances.

In June 2017, we were pleased to launch the exciting results of this analysis in our first published BikeAble study, “Reconnecting Milwaukee,” which found that neighborhoods experiencing inequality disproportionately lack access to biking and walking facilities, but that investments in just two trail projects—along the 30th Street Corridor and the Kinnickinnic River Trail corridor, have the potential to increase access to trails citywide from 25,000 to 200,000 residents.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/BikeAble
Through the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) recognizes and showcases exemplary rail-trails in the United States that have had a demonstrated impact in their communities.

Public Picks Louisiana’s Tammany Trace in National Vote for 2017 Rail-Trail Hall of Fame

RTC congratulates Louisiana’s Tammany Trace, which was selected as the 2017 inductee into the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame by the public through a national voting competition. Key attractions along the paved 27-mile pathway include Lake Pontchartrain, Fontainebleau State Park and Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

The Trace was the first rail-trail in the state and now joins 30 previous Hall of Famers recognized for their outstanding scenic value, usage, amenities, historical significance and community value.

In 1992, St. Tammany Parish acquired the disused Illinois Central Railroad line that would later become the rail-trail. Shortly beforehand in 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act had been passed, and the Trace became one of the first rail-trails in the country funded by the landmark legislation that allowed federal transportation money to be spent on walking and bicycling projects. In 2000, the trail was designated as one of only 50 Millennium Legacy Trails in the nation in recognition of its significance to Louisiana.

Nebraska Trail Visionaries
Named 2017 Doppelt Family Rail-Trail Champions

RTC honored Nebraska’s Ross Greathouse and Lynn Lightner as our 2017 Doppelt-Family Rail-Trail Champions for nearly four decades of trail development and advocacy. An interior designer (Greathouse) and engineer (Lightner) by trade, the long-time friends are credited with helping to establish the Nebraska Trails Foundation (NTF) and for playing significant roles in the development of multiple well-loved rail-trails in the state. To date, Lightner has overseen the construction of 40 trail bridges and 30 volunteer work crews, and Greathouse estimates having raised $2.5 million for trails.

As a “career” highlight, both men point to the 22.9-mile Chief Standing Bear Trail—which was launched in the late 1990s by the NTF and completed in 2017, and which spans from Beatrice to the Nebraska-Kansas border. Named after the legendary leader of the Ponca Tribe, Chief Standing Bear, the trail serves as a lasting landmark for the tribe and its history.
CELEBRATING OUR CHAMPIONS

“Through vision, hard work and perseverance, David created an organization—and a movement—that transformed the American landscape. His legacy will live on as millions of Americans every year enjoy thousands of miles of rail-trails, thanks to a great idea David had more than 30 years ago.”

—RTC President Keith Laughlin

REMEMBERING A RAIL-TRAIL VISIONARY
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Co-Founder Passes Away

On Feb. 1, 2017, rail-trail visionary and RTC co-founder David Burwell passed away after a hard-fought battle with leukemia. During his 15 years as president, Burwell helped make rail-trails an ingrained part of the American cultural landscape.

A lawyer by training, he is credited for playing a pivotal role in the passing of landmark federal laws that have, to date, provided hundreds of millions of dollars for rail-trails; for establishing RTC’s legal program—now the country’s foremost defender of rail-trails in the U.S. courts; and for helping to make RTC the leading voice for trails in the country.

Photo by Carol Parker
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) serves as the national voice for a grassroots movement of 1 million+ people that use, support and advocate for rail-trails and other multiuse trails across the country. Throughout 2017, we utilized a number of platforms—in print, online and in person—to continue to build awareness and appreciation for trails and the transformative value that they bring to individuals and communities.

Sojourn Ride Spotlights the Impact of Trails

Our annual sojourns are designed to bring together bicyclists from around the country on multiday rides that celebrate long-distance trails and draw attention to the gaps in developing regional trail systems that, if complete, could result in innumerable economic, health and environmental benefits for communities.

RTC’s 2017 Sojourn in western Pennsylvania followed the Great Allegheny Passage and Montour Trail for a six-day excursion in June spanning approximately 175 miles. Nearly 200 people participated from 31 states, providing an estimated $165,086 in direct economic impact to the area.

Opening Day Promotes Trail Use Nationwide

Nearly 7,000 people pledged to participate in the 2017 Opening Day for Trails on April 8, during which RTC partners and local trail groups hosted approximately 160 special events in 30 states!

Each spring on Opening Day, RTC gathers partners to kick off the trail season with walks, rides and other events on trails around the country. Highlights in 2017 included special RTC-featured events in Pennsylvania, California, Washington, D.C. and Ohio, as well as a special “Great Ride Series” hosted by campaign sponsor Performance Bicycle in stores nationwide.
Providing Guides to America’s Multiuse Trails

To help outdoor enthusiasts discover amazing trail destinations throughout the Midwest, RTC published three guidebooks in 2017 featuring 179 multiuse trails in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. As a bonus, RTC shared some of these trail experiences virtually with our national community through #MappingMoments, a social media initiative aimed at highlighting special moments from our 2017 staff adventures to document and map these incredible community assets.

Sharing the Inspiring Stories of Rail-Trails and the People Behind Them

With a circulation of 112,000 and a larger reach to thousands of additional policymakers and partners, Rails to Trails magazine is RTC’s flagship publication, dedicated to telling powerful stories of how trails impact communities across America. Through the magazine’s four annual issues, we’re sharing the inspiring voices of trail managers, advocates, volunteers and leaders, and shining a national spotlight on their important work to advance trail network development.

By highlighting unique trail destinations and the ways trails are shaping the fabric of communities, the magazine effectively raises awareness of these key community assets and draws attention to the significant personal value that trails bring for health, transportation and recreation.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/magazine

Ensuring the Best Trail Experiences for All

For the past three years, RTC’s Share the Trail campaign has been a key national initiative for educating Americans on trail use safety and etiquette, with a goal of ensuring people of every age and ability have a positive experience on America’s pathways.

In 2017, RTC won a dotComm Award for a series of short videos we developed on the six “Golden Rules” of trail use! Additionally, through our Trail Expert Network, we expanded our reach by distributing our collection of trail etiquette tools and materials to trail managers, who promoted the campaign’s upbeat, educational message in their communities.

Learn more: railstotrails.org/sharethetrail

TrailLink.com: Connecting People to Trail Experiences Nationwide

TrailLink.com has become more important than ever for connecting people with trails as demand for these assets increases nationwide. The website—which currently features maps and waypoints for more than 32,000 miles of rail-trails and multiuse trails—served over 7 million visitors in FY 2017 and received more than 240,000 downloads for its iOS and Android mobile apps.

TrailLink also continued to expand by adding information for more than 200 new trails and updating more than 287—which collectively included the addition of more than 2,000 miles of trail maps. With support from American Express, RTC added travel itineraries for 150 trails, with specially curated recommendations for dining, lodging and sightseeing. Additionally, with support from FedEx, RTC added new functionality that enables TrailLink users to share and showcase local events and encourage participation and stewardship of their local trails.
Rails-to-Trails Community

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC’s) community of trail enthusiasts and advocates is the reason why we are able to make an impact. Their support propels our mission and gives power to our work.

Join our community: railstotrails.org/support

1 Million+
grassroots network that includes:

162,000 members & supporters

160,000+ social media community

450,000 email subscribers

112,000 magazine subscribers
Summary of Activities and Changes in Net Assets for the Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 30, 2017

### Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>$3,024,234</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$3,935,192</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Contracts</td>
<td>$1,501,327</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Support</td>
<td>$991,387</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties, Investments and Other Income</td>
<td>$463,090</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,915,230</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail Development</td>
<td>$3,314,058</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Information and Events</td>
<td>$2,177,226</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National, State and Local Policy</td>
<td>$1,432,233</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>$196,064</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Program Services</td>
<td>$452,518</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>$932,966</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$1,322,086</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$9,827,151</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</table>

### Net Income from Operations

- **$88,079**

### Non-Operating Income

- **$424,854**

### Change in Temporarily Restricted

- **$402,960**

### Change in Permanently Restricted

- **$0**

### Total Change in Net Assets

- **$915,893**

### Net Assets Beginning of Year

- **$6,392,457**

### Net Assets End of Year

- **$7,308,350**

*Non-operating income represents realized and unrealized gains and losses on investment of restricted assets. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is a nonprofit organization as qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Codes.*
The board members and staff of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy come from diverse backgrounds but with a common purpose—to enrich the lives of millions of Americans by creating a nationwide network of trails that support active transportation, health and wellness, environmental sustainability and economic vitality in communities across America.

Reflects board members and their affiliations at the end of fiscal year 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAIR</th>
<th>SECRETARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. Katherine Kraft, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Gail M. Lipstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America Walks</td>
<td>Friends of the Chester Valley Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Princeton, New Jersey</td>
<td>Malvern, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<th>VICE CHAIR</th>
<th>TREASURER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John P. Rathbone</td>
<td>Timothy Noel, Ph.D., CFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Beach, Virginia</td>
<td>T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angle Associates</td>
<td>Pottstown, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilford, Connecticut</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joseph L. Barrow Jr.</th>
<th>Douglas Monieson</th>
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<tr>
<td>The First Tee</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
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<td>Jacksonville, Florida</td>
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<tr>
<th>Jon Cofsky</th>
<th>Frank Mulvey</th>
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<td>[whitepenny]</td>
<td>ITER Associates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haddonfield, New Jersey</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew Cohen</th>
<th>Tom Petri</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stoel Rives, LLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rose M. Z. Gowen, M.D.</th>
<th>Rebecca Riley</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville City Commission</td>
<td>Tiverton, Rhode Island</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brownsville, Texas</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guy O. Williams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.O. Williams &amp; Associates, LLC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ypsilanti, Michigan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
STAFF

Reflects staff members at the end of fiscal year 2017.

**President’s Office**
 Keith Laughlin, President
 Katie Guerin, Head of Strategic Initiatives

**Communications**
 Brandi Horton, Vice President of Communications
 Amy Kapp, Content Strategy Manager and Editor-in-Chief of Rails to Trails
 Joe LaCroix, Graphic Design Specialist
 Anthony Le, Web and Multimedia Manager
 Suzanne Matyas, Social Media and Campaigns Coordinator

**Development**
 Mary O’Connor, Vice President of Development and Partnerships
 Milo Bateman, Manager of Membership Operations
 Jorge Brito, Trailblazer Society Manager
 Ben Carter, Senior Director of Development
 Ryan Cree, Manager of Online Campaigns
 Donald Minor, Customer Service Coordinator
 Jimmy O’Connor, Major Gifts Officer
 Deborah Zwick, Development Coordinator

**Finance and Administration**
 Cindy Dickerson, Chief Operating Officer
 Elton Clark, Human Resources Manager
 Irma Joseph, Senior Staff Accountant
 Frederick Schaedtler, Senior Director of TrailLink.com
 Laura Stark, Staff Writer and TrailLink.com Content Manager
 Derek Strout, GIS Specialist

**Policy**
 Kevin Mills, Senior Vice President of Policy
 Drew Dupuy, Manager of Policy Outreach
 Marianne Wesley Fowler, Senior Strategist for Policy Advocacy
 Leeann Sinpatanasakul, Advocacy Manager
 Patrick Wojahn, Director of Government Relations

**Trail Development**
 Liz Thorstensen, Vice President of Trail Development
 Kevin Belanger, Trail Planner
 Torsha Bhattacharya, Director of Research
 Shane Farthing, Senior Director of Active Transportation Programs
 Eli Griffen, Manager of Trail Development Resources

Yvonne Mwangi, Trail Development and TrailLink Coordinator
Kelly Pack, Director of Trail Development
Philip Shutler, GIS Analyst

**Baltimore Office**
 Jim Brown, Trail Development Manager
 Avery Harmon, Community Outreach Manager

**Florida Office**
 Ken Bryan, State Director

**Midwest Regional Office**
 Brian Housh, Midwest Policy Manager
 Eric Oberg, Director of Trail Development

**Milwaukee Office**
 Willie Karidis, Project Manager

**Northeast Regional Office**
 Anya Saretzky, Project Manager
 Tom Sexton, Regional Director
 Elizabeth Sewell, Trail Development Manager

**Western Regional Office**
 Laura Cohen, Regional Director
 Barry Bergman, Trail Development Manager

Photo courtesy Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Learn more about our movement to create a nationwide network of trails and trail networks that deliver incredible benefits for people and places.

railstotrails.org
TrailLink.com

Engage with our nationwide community of trail fans and trail supporters!

Facebook.com/railstotrails
Twitter.com/railstotrails
Instagram.com/railstotrails
LinkedIn.com/company/railstotrails
YouTube.com/railstotrails

Offices

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info@railstotrails.org

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Tallahassee, FL 32317
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Milwaukee, WI 53207
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Northeast Regional Office
230 South Broad St., 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
267.332.4267

Western Regional Office
Historic Central Building
436 14th St., Suite 416
Oakland, CA 94612
510.992.4662