

# The LittleSis Tech & Training Program



## Introduction

The LittleSis Tech & Training program builds research tools and resources and provides training opportunities to support on-the-ground corporate campaigning and corporate accountability research and reporting. The program supports an array of organizations, movement spaces, and serves a general audience including activists, academics, journalists, and fellow researchers across disciplines and issue areas.

Our mission with this program is to bring together a wide array of publicly available information into one research platform with a suite of tools that help our users turn data into narratives and stories that support the goals of movements and campaigns.

## The LittleSis Tech Suite

LittleSis Tech is core to our mission and work as an organization that helps promote power research skills and analysis in our movements for corporate accountability. It's a critical tool we use to train organizers and researchers that demystifies power and shows how power research can be done by anyone with an interest in it. Our current suite of free, open-source research tools includes:

**LittleSis.org:** Our flagship research database LittleSis – “the opposite of big brother” – is composed of interlinked profiles of powerful individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors. As of 2022 our data set includes over 400,000 people and organizations and more than 1.6 million relationships between them. Profiles detail a wealth of information vital to any investigation of the ways power networks guide the formulation of public policy, from board memberships to campaign contributions, social and professional ties to government contracts.

**Oligrapher:** Our network visualization tool Oligrapher – Oligarch + Graph – is linked to the LittleSis database and allows LittleSis users to visualize their research and turn their data into shareable maps and stories. Oligrapher is an important tool for our own research as well as an

important tool for training aspiring power researchers and partners in this work. Oligrapher maps have been used for reporting in major news publications, national corporate campaigns, and accountability efforts everywhere from protests at major art galleries to music videos.

## Trainings and Resources

- **LittleSis Research Tools:** Quarterly free public trainings that provide an overview on our suite of tools and basic demos on how to use them. These trainings are geared toward the general public as well as fellow researchers at partner organizations who are interested in using our suite of research tools.
- **Research Tools for Organizers:** These trainings provide a basic understanding of what power research is and how to do it: where to begin your research process, what databases and tools are available for research, how to organize your research and begin to shape it into a campaign or narrative. Our accompanying Map the Power toolkit provides an overview of some of the research methods we teach in these trainings.
- **PowerLines101:** This primer provides an introduction and overview of the power behind investor-owned public electric utilities. It offers tools and strategies for researching their immense power and influence as well as campaign stories of communities challenging their power.

## How LittleSis Tech + Training Contributes to Campaigns

The range of data in LittleSis.org on the corporate elite, compiled over a decade by organizers, researchers, and campaigners, gives us a view into the breadth and depth of corporate power and influence in our society. This knowledge can be leveraged by organizers to better understand where there might be opportunities for stronger, more strategic, intersectional organizing that can challenge that power.

Further, our efforts to expand research tools' trainings empowers campaigners and community stakeholders with critical tools and insights and brings much-needed strategic research capacity to our movement spaces.

## The Future of the LittleSis Tech + Training Program

We're committed to keeping LittleSis Tech free and accessible to our movements and to the public more broadly. In the last year we've begun to translate key features and tools in the database to Spanish. Other priorities for the coming year include:

- Improving database design and overall user experience on the site
- Building new editing tools to increase data upload capabilities and create new types of visualizations
- Integrate our data with links to other datasets vital to power research such as state campaign contributions and business data from the SEC
- Craft new research resources that support dynamic on-the-ground and digital organizing including resources related to the expansion of private equity and utilities.

The LittleSis Tech + Training team is increasingly involved in campaigns and spaces in our movement ecosystem that are challenging the power and practices of Big Tech. We're excited to join more of these spaces both as a partner in strategic research and also as a model for what people powered tech can look like. Currently, we are proud members of the Athena Coalition and Crescendo's Big Tech Sells War campaign.