

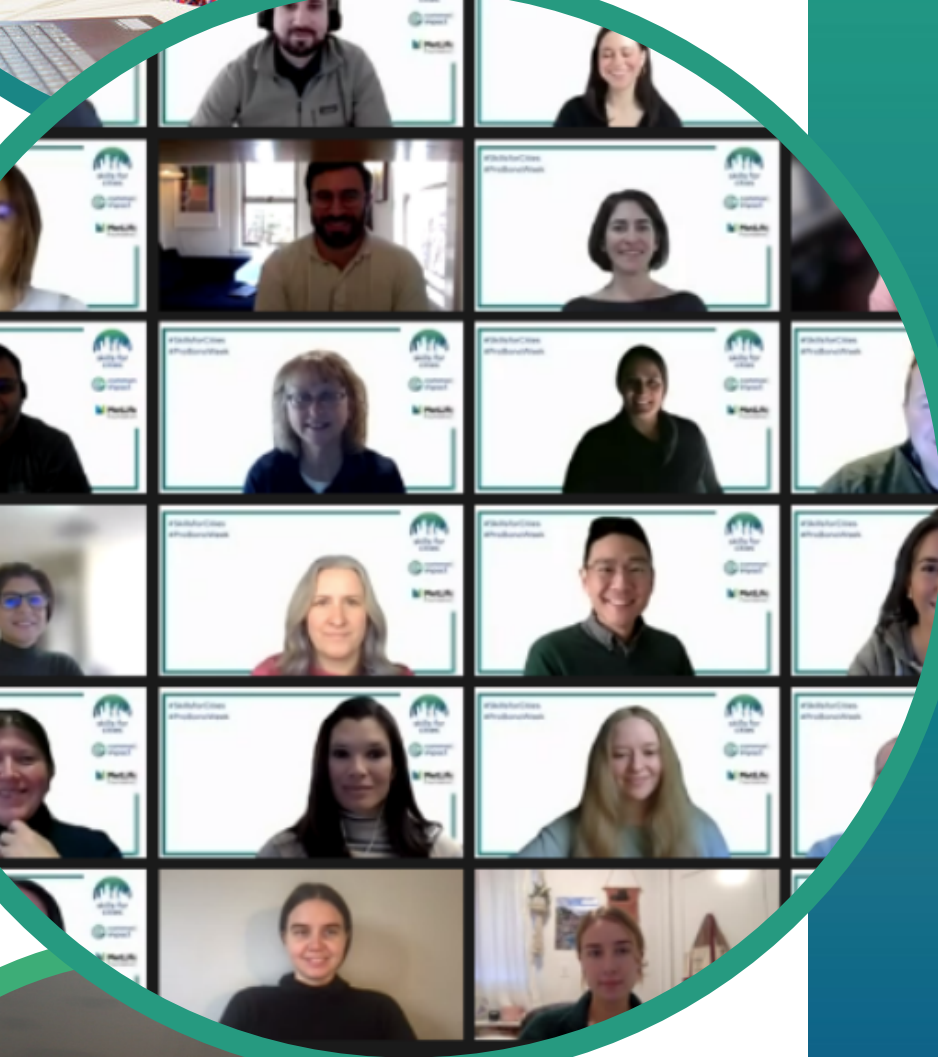


Skills for Cities

Fall 2022

Impact Report

Taking Action
for Climate Justice
& Racial Equity



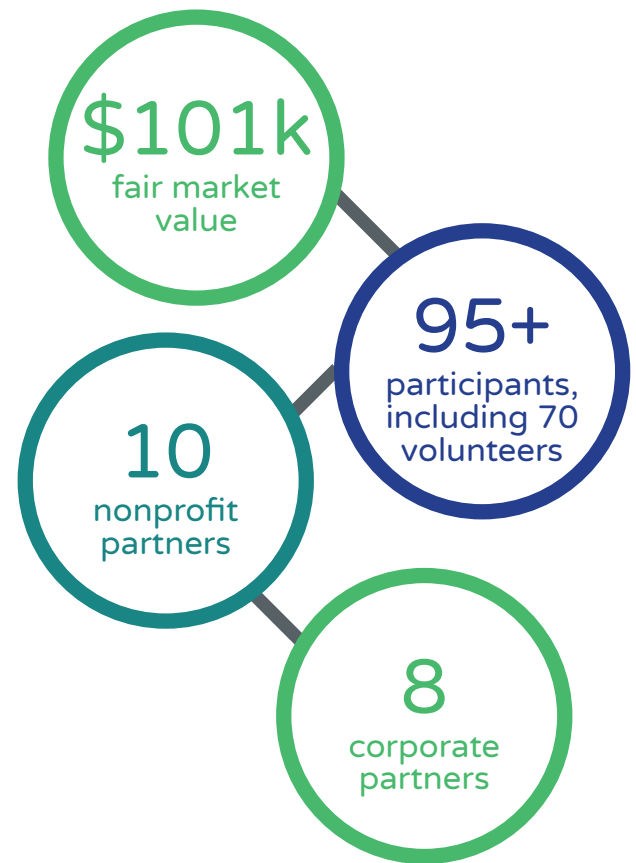
Taking Action for Climate Justice & Racial Equity

Water contamination, lead poisoning, air pollution, and food insecurity are daily environmental and socioeconomic issues that disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color. Unfortunately, these communities are also the least likely to have the resources to recover from ecological disasters. Community-centered nonprofits are leading the way toward a more equitable and sustainable future for all and have made tremendous strides. Still, many need more operational support in critical areas to thrive and better serve their communities. Common Impact and the MetLife Foundation hosted Skills for Cities to tackle these challenges by bringing together over 70 corporate volunteers from top companies for an intensive one-day virtual skills-based volunteering event with leaders from ten nonprofits. The event helped connect corporate volunteers with leading nonprofits focused on climate justice, sustainability, and racial equity to find solutions to their most pressing capacity-building challenges.

Volunteers provided skills-based support for:

- Finance
- Operations
- Strategy
- Data Analysis
- Human Resources
- Marketing & Branding
- Client Relations & Sales

Impact Snapshots



Volunteer Reflection

"I had the most amazing volunteering experience with Skills for Cities. I wasn't sure what to expect, but once we met our nonprofit and heard their story, we were immediately engaged in solving their challenge. The team diversity and collaboration were great. It's hard to limit any section of this experience as my favorite, but if I had to, it would be when we presented to the nonprofit. They were so appreciative of the outcome... their response was so impactful. Thanks for this amazing opportunity... I look forward to doing this again for years and years down the road."

- **Willie Rowland, Marsh**

"Working with nonprofits and actually seeing them do so much work and have so much impact on our community was gratifying. It also helps our climate anxiety. It is huge to see these organizations creating equity."

- **Ryan Yoshinaga, Marsh**

A Community Conversation: One World, One Justice: Cross-Sector Solutions for Environmental & Racial Justice

Common Impact gathered a group of nonprofit leaders and conveners championing climate justice, sustainability, and racial equity. The panelists explored how water contamination, food insecurity, and other troubling climate issues have disproportionately affected communities of color and the challenge faced by nonprofits focused on alleviating these issues. The conversation highlighted the importance of climate action, community-centered solutions, and creating spaces for diverse voices and the youth in sustainability work.

Leila Saad, Chief Executive Officer at Common Impact, moderated the discussion, which featured Paula Brooks, Environmental Justice Program Manager at Hoosier Environmental Council; Naim Edwards, Director of Michigan State University-Detroit Partnership Urban Agriculture Facility; and Kwanza Billy, Advocacy Chair at The National Urban League Young Professionals.



Community Conversation Moderator
Leila Saad, CEO of Common Impact

Panelist Quotes



"It's one thing to give dollars to an organization. It is another to be willing to shift your company goals to use less energy, create a sustainability plan on what service and funding look like, and do the internal work to match the mission of the organizations you are looking to support."

– Kwanza Billy,
Advocacy Chair at the
National Urban League Young
Professionals



"My advice to corporations is to reflect and examine how your internal and external operations can help reduce [environmental] impact and use a portion of profits to support entities doing good work at the local level. Think about local issues affecting your city, including your employees. Ask, what we are doing that makes their life better, and what we are doing that compromises our health and that of future generations. I encourage all [corporate] decision makers at whatever level you are at to use your [resources] and agency to think through this."

– Naim Edwards,
Director of MSU-Detroit Partnership
Urban Agriculture Facility at
Michigan State University



"Our most pressing task is to prepare residents for the effects of climate change, such as a rise in utility costs. We advocate for clean drinking water, wastewater treatment, and wider use of social vulnerability measures to account for census parameters that mask community needs. We also empower residents to challenge zoning petitions in communities overburdened by environmental hazards."

– Paula Brooks,
Environmental Justice
Program Manager at Hoosier
Environmental Council

Nonprofit Impact

"I just think I had the most wonderful group. They were truly amazing; they took it so seriously and were so dedicated to helping us bring more capacity to our organization. I am moved by the work they put in, the suggestions they gave, and the offering to give more of themselves outside of this space. They did a wonderful job, thanks so much!"

– Leazona Bethel, All Hands and Heart



"It felt [great] to be able to offload a lot of the different things our organization has been struggling with and what we have been doing well. [Seeing their proposal] on what we can get done in the next 60 days before 2023 and what we can do to build leverage to get to the next level for 2023 was helpful. I created new relationships with individuals I potentially could not have access to. I am grateful that they were so kind and gracious."

– RaShaunda Lugrand, InTuneMother Society.

"We were very impressed with all that was suggested and built out, and it is apparent that much consideration and prep work went into it prior even to yesterday. We certainly felt heard and that the suggestions were customized to our goals, bandwidths, and audiences. All of the perspectives and suggestions felt spot on and validated our choices in strategy or sparked new ideas. Everything felt valuable. This deliverable is very actionable and thorough without being overwhelming, and we're looking forward to making use of it going forward and driving some new initiatives!"

– Director of Marketing, Rainforest Connect

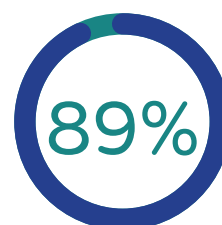


Co-Host Quote

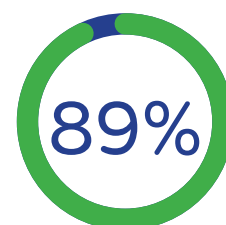
"The MetLife Foundation is proud to continue its partnership with Common Impact. Together, we leverage the time, talent, and passion of employees to be servant leaders and address head-on intersectional issues like climate justice and racial equity in communities across the U.S.,"

– Tia Hodges, President & CEO of MetLife Foundation and Head of Corporate Giving and Employee Volunteerism at MetLife

Corporate Impact



very likely to recommend Skills for Cities to a nonprofit peer.



said they were satisfied with the delivery received from the Skills for Cities event.

Corporate Impact



said that knowing their company cares about and makes time for employees to engage in social justice issues makes them proud to work there.



said that knowing their company cares about connecting employees to issues of importance in their community makes them more likely to recommend it as a great place to work.



are interested in participating in another Skills for Cities event.



increased their awareness of social justice issues as a result of Skills for Cities.

“Working on an assignment outside your everyday tasks allows you to bring to the surface different skills and develop them further in a collaborative, non-judgmental environment. The satisfaction that you are empowered and able to help someone else reach their goals is very rewarding.”

– Senior Global Medical Director, Pfizer

“For individuals who are looking to exercise a skillset that they don’t get to use regularly, this is a great opportunity to strengthen that skill set and network with others.”

– MetLife Foundation volunteer

90% considered Skills for Cities a valuable professional development opportunity and

98% thought working in a multi-company was useful to the experience.

“Hearing firsthand how organizations in my area are working so hard towards equity and social justice, makes me want to get more involved in that part of my community.”

“I am reminded of not only the need to innovate and find solutions to eliminate food insecurity, but also to ensure people working on this important issue are from diverse backgrounds. For the people, by the people.”

Corporate volunteers expanded their skills in areas such as:

- Problem-Solving & Navigating Ambiguity
- Collaboration & Teamwork
- Client Focus & Empathetic Approach
- Adaptability & Synthesizing Ideas in Real-Time
- Creative Thinking & Innovation

Project Spotlights



All Hands and Hearts

All Hands and Hearts (AHAH) addresses the immediate and long-term needs of communities impacted by natural disasters in the U.S. and internationally while also running continued programming in areas that are prone to disasters year after year.

AHAH relies heavily on volunteer support but has recently faced challenges recruiting and engaging volunteers due to the pandemic. However, the organization believes that bringing volunteers on-site to help with disaster relief is one of the best ways to create long-term connections. It is interested in offering curated volunteer trips for employees of their corporate donors in the hopes of fostering lasting volunteer relationships. Knowing corporate donors will want to understand the quantitative and qualitative impact of these trips, AHAH joined Skills for Cities in pursuit of recommendations for building out numbers-based trip options that show how employees (and their companies) will benefit from participating in disaster relief volunteer trips.

A cross-company team of volunteers tapped into their collective skills in client relations, sales, marketing & communications, and operations to develop strategic recommendations for creating different tiered trip options, including suggested donation levels, impact metrics, and how to effectively present these options to corporate donors. After presenting their ideas to AHAH staff, the volunteers incorporated their feedback into their final deliverable: a proposal for Silver, Gold, and Platinum volunteer trip packages, plus recommendations for increasing corporate and volunteer engagement via programming enhancements, website updates, and marketing tactics, as well as high-level next steps for AHAH's 30-day and 60-day plans.

"The Skills for Cities experience was far greater and more impactful than I even anticipated. The amount of time and effort the corporate volunteers put into their presentation was astounding and impressive. We are able to take back new information and findings that will positively affect our organization and teams. We could not be more pleased and excited to use these new details and facts to increase our donor base and enhance our corporate volunteer trips."

– **Corporate Relations Manager,**
All Hands and Hearts



The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national organization that creates parks, protects land, and provides access to green space. TPL's work not only cultivates healthier communities for generations to come but also has a hand in mitigating the continuing impacts of climate change.

As the organization has grown, it has become increasingly essential that onboarding processes are smooth and training materials easy to find. However, as they are currently housed across three separate platforms – Google Drive, a shared drive, and an intranet – TPL is embarking on a complete migration to SharePoint to enable more cohesive document sharing and permissions negotiation, as well as a more effective integration with Microsoft Teams.

At Skills for Cities, TPL collaborated with a team of corporate volunteers specializing in IT and process mapping to review the 30-50 files linked in the onboarding template and design an initial file structure that is easily searchable and intuitive for new hires to navigate, which will ultimately serve as a model for building out a comprehensive file architecture in preparation for the large-scale SharePoint migration.

The volunteers presented TPL with an overview of how to inventory, migrate, manage, and maintain onboarding and training materials, documenting their design process and rationale for context and clarity. Additionally, they shared a high-level implementation plan and best practices for ongoing governance. Equipped with these strategies and insights, TPL now has the direction it needs to complete its data migration with confidence and ensure its new staff is efficiently onboarded and set up for success.

"It is really gratifying to have the opportunity to contribute to people and organizations who are doing such necessary and meaningful work."

– **MetLife Foundation volunteer**

"This was really great as it gave me an opportunity to connect with people who are very different from the ones I usually work with during the year and learn from their approaches and styles of work."

– **Skill Skills for Cities volunteer**

Special thanks to our
Skills for Cities partners
and participants!

We hope you continue
your commitment to racial
equity and climate justice by
using your skills to support
community-centered
organizations.



MetLife
Foundation



Interested in participating in the next Skills for Cities?
Read more and reach out to
partners@commonimpact.org to get involved.

www.commonimpact.org