



GLOBAL IMPACT SERIES

GREAT LAKES BAY REGIONAL ALLIANCE (GLBRA) AND DELTA COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGE

Photo by Sreekanth Peetha on Unsplash. Inset: (From left), Alicia Adams, Naomi Barker, Kathryn Barr, Anna Seifert, and Celia Bravard.

Being sustainable can feel like a daunting task, especially for organizations that haven't had experience establishing sustainability goals. Making sustainability approachable, inclusive, and achievable to all types of organizations is the core driver for this Dow Fellow's Team project with the **Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance (GLBRA)**. GLBRA represents the counties of Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland and Saginaw in Michigan, all which fall in the Great Lakes Bay region.. As part of their mission to "encourage, support and celebrate the regional collaboration and initiative that will improve the economic vitality and quality of life in the Great Lakes Bay Region," GLBRA launched the Sustainability Pledge. The Pledge aims to guide local organizations to a more sustainable future through voluntary action and goal-setting. **Through a partnership with Delta College** (located in the Great Lakes Bay Region), GLBRA identified seven diverse regional organizations to serve as Sustainability Pledge pilots. GLBRA and Delta College collaborated with a Dow Fellows team in 2021 to assist the seven pilot organizations in creating self-assessment sustainability roadmaps, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

// What we did this year was build really good bones."
- Anna Seifert

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is more than just climate, water, and energy: it also includes people. This holistic definition of sustainability is described in the SDGs 17 global goals that "provide a blueprint for peace and prosperity of people and the planet, now and into the future." In addition to clean air and water, food security, climate action, and circular economies, these goals also advocate for equity, education, and health and wellbeing to eliminate poverty and reduce social inequalities. While developing the sustainability roadmaps, the Dow Fellows team highlighted how goals and actions related to the 17 SDGs.

“What’s exciting about our project is that we really facilitate access to sustainability in a way that is approachable. It’s not condescending, it meets organizations where they’re at but still allows them to feel like there’s a real roadmap for moving forward”

— Naomi Barker

GATHERING INFORMATION

To create the roadmaps, the Dow Fellows team worked closely with each pilot organization to understand organizational values, operations, and abilities. Through one-on-one visioning sessions, they helped the pilot organizations identify current sustainable actions, sustainability goals for the future and any constraints on achieving their goals.

With the knowledge and insights gained from the meetings and visioning exercises, the Dow Fellows team performed an extensive literature review. They compiled over 100 sustainability resources for the pilot organizations, ranging from local to national, and general to industry-specific.

Additionally, the Dow Fellows team created a sustainability assessment for organizations to assess their sustainability progress. Based on this assessment, the team was able to tailor the sustainability roadmaps with customized resources and goals for each organization. The assessment was grouped into sections: Sustainability Strategy, Climate, Purchased Goods, Waste, Water, People, and industry-specific certifications.

Finally, the Team created an individualized sustainability plan for the pilot organizations, based on their visioning exercise and sustainability assessment.

PROJECT IMPACT

With the resources, goals, and roadmaps created through this project, the Dow Fellows team established a solid foundation for other organizations in the region interested in developing a sustainability roadmap. Each of the seven pilot organizations have achievable steps, resources to guide them, and a newfound understanding of what sustainability means for their organization and the Great Lakes Bay Region. The Dow Fellows team expects that the sustainability assessment and resource guide will be used by GLBRA and many more organizations to guide sustainability efforts in the future.

PROJECT TEAM

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CLIENT

- Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance
- Delta College

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This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

