



# ECOLOGY

ACTION CENTER



# 2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

# ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit environmental agency with a mission to inspire and assist our community in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County.

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# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Ecology Action Center,

Thank you for your continued support in 2022. It was a challenging year in many ways but also brought new beginnings and new initiatives for our community.

Sadly, in the fall of 2022, we lost one of our own. Angela Bossard, our Administrative Assistant, finally lost her battle with glioblastoma after a year and half. Her passing had a big impact on the staff and organization. Angela's strong work ethic, invaluable office skills, and impressive loyalty and commitment greatly improved the business operations of the EAC. But most of all, we dearly miss our friend with her positive attitude, sassy sense of humor, and unvarnished direct communication style always delivered with a hint of her Texas drawl. Together with her family we planted a tree in her memory at Tipton Park, just a short distance from her home so they can visit it often.

We were happy to add three new members to the EAC team in 2022, beginning with Deb Pitcher as our new Development Coordinator. Deb will help build the new 2071 Endowment Fund, named for the future 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding. We are over halfway to our 100<sup>th</sup> year and as we prepare for the future we need to build a more diverse funding structure to better endure economic ups and downs.

Former intern and recent IWU alum Katie Vogler joined us as our new Education Coordinator. In addition to a broad knowledge of waste, recycling and other issues, Katie brings a persistent smile and wacky sense of humor to the EAC. Among other responsibilities, Katie is our representative in the local schools, teaching students about waste reduction and clean water protection.

ISU environmental health grad and Mackinaw native Kelsey Bremner joined the EAC as a Program Technician, using her education and strong communication skills to help the EAC with ongoing projects like the annual county-wide waste and recycling rate calculations, the EAC's greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies, and maintaining our Recycle Coach databases so that all of your recycling information is always up to date!

While it is not yet official, we applied for and were awarded our first federal grant from the US EPA. We will have more to announce on this project in 2023, but are excited to expand our work on air quality issues, especially in the environmental justice areas of our community.

On the national scene, the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act promises to increase funding for clean and renewable energy projects to help address climate change and provide much needed funding for environmental justice issues in marginalized communities across the nation.

Like always, in 2022, our efforts were successful largely due to help from our friends. You, our volunteers, donors, partners, or supporters in other ways, helped make all of our work possible. Environmental challenges continue to increase, both here and across the world. We hope that our relationship with you will continue to grow so that together, we can continue to make a better world for current and future generations.

Thank you for all of your support,



**Michael Brown**  
Executive Director





# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## **The Ecology Action Center provides:**

Recycling and waste education to fulfill the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act requirements for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal;

Storm water education to meet the public education requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Management Plans for Bloomington, Normal, McLean County, and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District;

Energy efficiency and renewable energy education

and outreach for Bloomington and Normal, including residential and small business energy assessments;

Air quality data through our greenhouse gas emissions inventory process and the development of a Community Energy Strategic Plan to reduce emissions; and

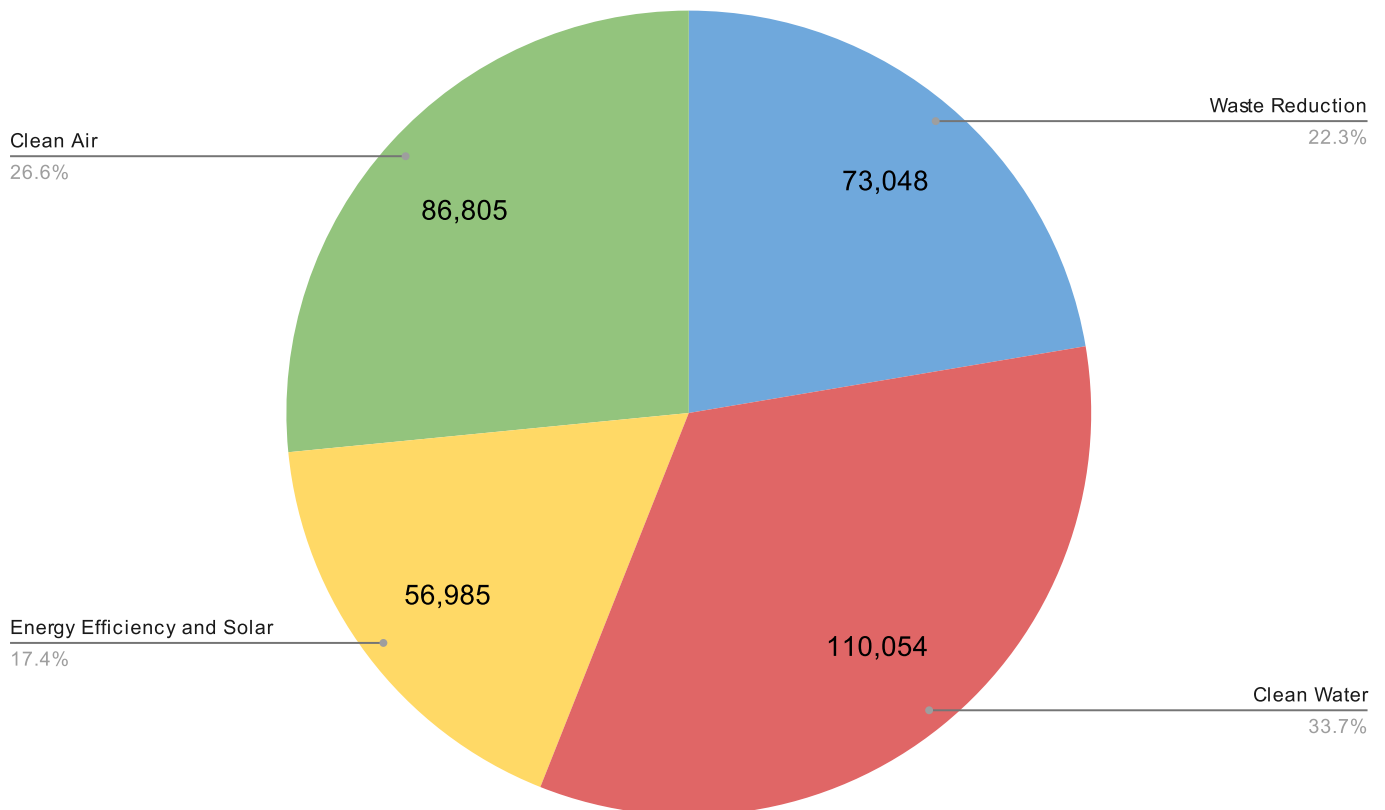
Distribution of resources on numerous sustainability topics for a more healthy and sustainable community.

# 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

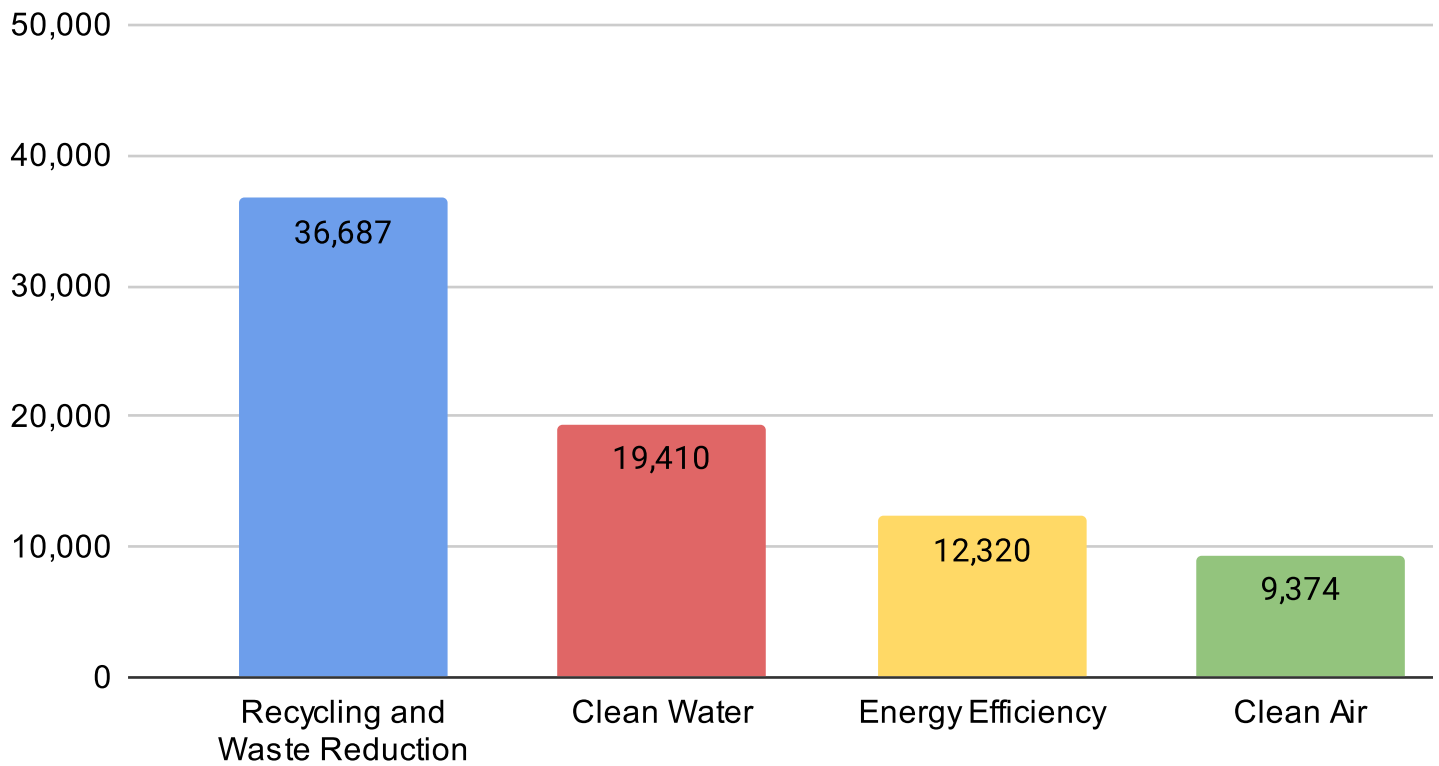
**326,892**  
**TOTAL MEDIA**  
**IMPRESSIONS**

The Ecology Action Center does extensive media outreach to share information, help spread awareness, and to promote upcoming events or initiatives. Information is shared through newspaper ads, radio commercials, and through direct newspaper and radio interviews.

## Social Media Impressions (Facebook and Twitter)



# EAC Website Visits



**1,497  
HOUSEHOLDS**



Received a monthly e-newsletter covering a variety of environmental topics.

Learned about waste reduction, clean water, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean air topics at 33 different presentations and outreach events.



**1,705  
RESIDENTS**

# IN THE COMMUNITY: A SNAPSHOT



## 10

Sugar Creek  
Stewards workdays

## 100

high school sophomore students  
attended the HOBY Leadership  
Seminar at Illinois Wesleyan  
University lead by EAC

## 35

bags of trash were collected  
along the Constitution  
Trail from the Chateau to  
Audubon Gardens by 20  
volunteers



## 283

storm drains in Bloomington - Normal neighborhoods were  
stenciled "Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean", marking every  
stenciled drain with a GPS tracker, educating residents about  
water pollution

## 40

visitors had questions  
answered and information  
shared about Yard Smart and  
8 rain barrel workshops



## 20

youth and adults utilized  
EAC trash grabbers to do  
trail and creek clean-up at  
Ewing Park in Bloomington



# 120

residents were connected to the Ameren - Nicor pilot program which provides free energy efficiency kits

# 5

Storm Drain Stenciling activities



# 27

Tree Corps tree prep and planting days



# 70

total attendees of the Heyworth Public Library summer reading program learned about water pollution and how water treatment plants work



# 30

city managers from around Illinois listened to a presentation about how the EAC assists the municipalities in reaching and going beyond solid waste mandates





# Recycling and Waste Reduction

4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom programs at McLean County Schools



**24**  
schools



**63**  
classrooms



**1,287**  
students

Fourth grade students learn about the amount of waste sent to the landfill. Students then participate in an interactive sorting activity and engage in a discussion about materials that are regularly disposed of in their homes, and different options for that waste, including reducing consumption, reusing items, proper recycling, and composting.

## Normal

- Grove Elementary School, Epiphany Catholic School, Metcalf Elementary School, Glenn Elementary School, Parkside Elementary School, Sugar Creek Elementary School

## Bloomington

- Washington Elementary School, Cedar Ridge Elementary School, Oakland Elementary School, Pepper Ridge Elementary School, Northpoint Elementary School, Bent Elementary School, Stevenson Elementary School, Benjamin Elementary School, Cornerstone Christi, and Fox Creek Elementary School

## McLean County

- Heyworth Elementary School, LeRoy Elementary School, Ridgeview Elementary School, Towanda Elementary School, Olympia North Elementary School, Carlock Elementary School, Hudson Elementary School, and Tri-Valley Middle School

## We could not do this work without the generous support of our community members

A total of 285 volunteers helped with 46 Ecology Action Center Activities and put in a total of 982 volunteer hours.

According to Independent Sector, one hour of volunteer labor is worth \$31.80, which means our **generous volunteers worked an equivalent of \$31,227.60 for the EAC!**

- Volunteer activities included:
  - 27 Tree Corps tree prep and planting days
  - 10 Sugar Creek Stewards Workdays
  - 5 Storm Drain Stenciling activities
  - Assisting at the Yard Smart Garden Walk
  - Surveying Recycling Dropbox Users
  - Earth Day Sugar Creek and Constitution Trail Clean-Up
  - Helping at a table at the Funky Farms Artpocalypse



# RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION

The Ecology Action Center is the solid waste agency for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal.

In this role, the EAC helps residents and businesses in McLean County reduce waste, increase recycling, and properly dispose of hazardous materials through numerous educational and outreach programs including our

Recycle Coach app and our 4th grade recycling classroom programs, and at local events like our biennial Household Hazardous Waste Collection. We continue to provide education on backyard composting, and in late 2020 we launched the subscription based BN Community Composting program.

# COUNTY WIDE RECYCLING RATE

Every year, as the solid waste agency for the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County, the EAC collects waste and recycling data to calculate the amount of waste generated and recycled in our county. This information is collected from various local waste haulers, specialty recyclers, institutions and businesses and serves as a lagging performance indicator of recycling outreach and education efforts in the community. The recycling rate helps guide the EAC to improve ongoing waste management planning for Bloomington-Normal and the McLean County area.

In 2021, McLean County's recycle rate increased slightly by 1.6% after seeing a decline during 2020. The Ecology Action Center's annual calculation of community-wide waste generation and recycling shows that the County reached a recycling rate of 43.8% in 2021. The county is still making progress towards its recycling rate goal of 50% set in the 20-year solid waste management plan. Some categories of recyclable materials saw significant fluctuations from the year prior due to various reasons including

the COVID-19 pandemic, economic growth, large manufacturing facilities and powerful storms.

As the economy grew so did the overall waste generated in McLean County, however the amount of waste recycled also saw significant increase. Hard to recycle items that require drop off at a retail or specialized location increased, most likely due to COVID-19 restrictions lifting. For example, fluorescent light bulbs that contain a small amount of mercury and require specialized handling and disposal, rose significantly in 2021 vs 2020. Another cause for the increased recycling rate could be attributed to recent industrial growth in our community and their related recyclable materials such as aluminum and batteries. Given the size of some of these manufactures the output is enough to sway the overall rate. There was a major ice storm in January 2021 causing widespread damage and in return the amount of brush collected and recycled increased nearly 95%. This increase caused the overall rate of organics recycling to rise significantly.

## MCLEAN COUNTY WASTE GENERATION AND RECYCLING RATES: 2016 - 2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Total MSW Recycled (tons)</b>	83,335	88,459	94,804	88,330	76,487	82,182
<b>Total MSW Landfilled (tons)</b>	120,815	124,364	109,467	104,772	104,919	105,442
<b>Total Municipal Solid Waste Generated (tons)</b>	204,150	211,230	204,271	193,102	181,406	187,624
<b>Recycling Rate</b>	40.8%	41.9%	46.4%	45.7%	42.2%	43.8%

# COMPOSTING WORKSHOPS

The EAC's composting workshops cover the basics of backyard composting and after the workshop, participants take home a custom-built 55-gallon compost bin. During the workshop participants learn the benefits of composting, what materials to include in their compost bin, and what to do with compostable materials that cannot be composted in a backyard setting. The workshop explains proper compost pile monitoring and maintenance, how to know when compost is ready to use, and how to know it is safe to use! The workshop also focuses on the importance of diverting organic waste from landfills in order to reduce the amount of methane gas released when those materials breakdown anaerobically in landfills.

EAC educators also provide resources to help participants identify jumping worms, and proper compost methods to keep them at bay. Participants leave the workshop with a sound understanding of the individual and community benefits of composting, and the confidence to set up and monitor compost in their own backyard compost pile, while keeping invasive jumping worms out of the garden.

In 2022, the EAC held one backyard composting workshop with seven attendees.



12/17/22

Dear EAC,  
Back in December 2021, we joined your composting program. In a year's time, as a household of two (and two cats) we generated approximately 425 lb and 15.5 oz of food waste.  
Please put this donation towards your Community Composting program and thank you for bringing this program to Bloomington -  
Normal.

Sincerely,  
Sarah

# COMMUNITY COMPOSTING

The BN Community Composting program continued to grow in 2022 with the addition of a second kiosk location! In early 2022 a new kiosk was installed at AB Hatchery in Bloomington, increasing access to the program. The program received 89 new subscribers bringing the total number of users to 242.

The BN Community Composting program is an easy way for anyone to compost food scraps. Starter kits, which cost around \$25, contain a 5-gallon bucket, compostable liners, and a kiosk card gaining subscribers access to both kiosks. At home, participants collect all food scraps and leftovers, including fruits and vegetables, grains, meat, bones and dairy products, as well as paper towels, paper napkins, greasy pizza boxes and Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified

compostable packaging and containers. Participants can store full bags of compostables in their 5-gallon bucket and conveniently drop off anytime at a kiosk, which are accessible 24/7. The only cost of program participation after purchasing a starter kit, is the purchase of additional compostable bags from the EAC; the program operation costs are built into the price of the bags. This program allows users to easily divert all of their food waste from the landfill.



For more information about the program, details on how to purchase your community composting starter kit, or to find out how to sponsor another kiosk for our community, visit [BNcommunityComposting.org](https://BNcommunityComposting.org).



# RECYCLE COACH

Recycle Coach is a comprehensive mobile and web-based app that makes it easy for residents to get fast and accurate information about our community's recycling options. Recycle Coach also provides details on how to recycle items not commonly accepted in the Bloomington and Normal curbside recycling collection. This free app helps users unlearn poor recycling habits that contribute to high contamination rates, and also offers personalized collection schedules and reminders, sorting guides, and other features that make recycling fun and easy. The mobile app is available for download and the web-based version is online at [RecycleBN.org](http://RecycleBN.org).



## During 2022:

- Recycle Coach had 2,356 mobile users and 7,177 web app users
- 6,400 total material searches

[Learn more at RecycleBN.org.](http://RecycleBN.org)

# MCLEAN COUNTY FREecycle



Administration and promotion of McFreecycle, a free listserv on the internet for the free exchange of materials in McLean County to avoid disposal of usable items. There are 1,786 current members with an estimated average

of 24 messages exchanged monthly. Usage of the service appears to be declining, likely due to redundant "free items" services now available as a part of social media platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor.com. In response to this trend, the EAC has developed guidance for the free exchange of materials using these additional platforms, and continues to provide support for community reuse to avoid disposal of usable items.







In 2014, the Ecology Action Center completed an initial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for the Bloomington-Normal community using data from 2008. This initial report quantified total and per capita emissions, identified primary sources of direct emissions, and serves as a baseline for future inventor comparison. The EAC staff completed a second inventory in 2016 with a broader scope; incorporating other air quality emissions, like ozone, regulated under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and can be harmful to public health. The Bloomington-Normal community is currently an attainment area for all six categories of air pollutants, meaning current concentrations of

pollutants are below levels established by NAAQS. However, past ozone measurements did exceed the new ozone standard five times, and could fail NAAQS requirements in the future. The financial cost of non-attainment is significant and can include loss of federal transportation funding and mandatory vehicle emissions testing among other ramifications. These impacts are in addition to the public health risks; ozone can damage the lungs, causing chest pain, coughing, and shortness of breath while also exacerbating chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma.

To combat the potential for non-attainment, and to improve the overall air quality in our



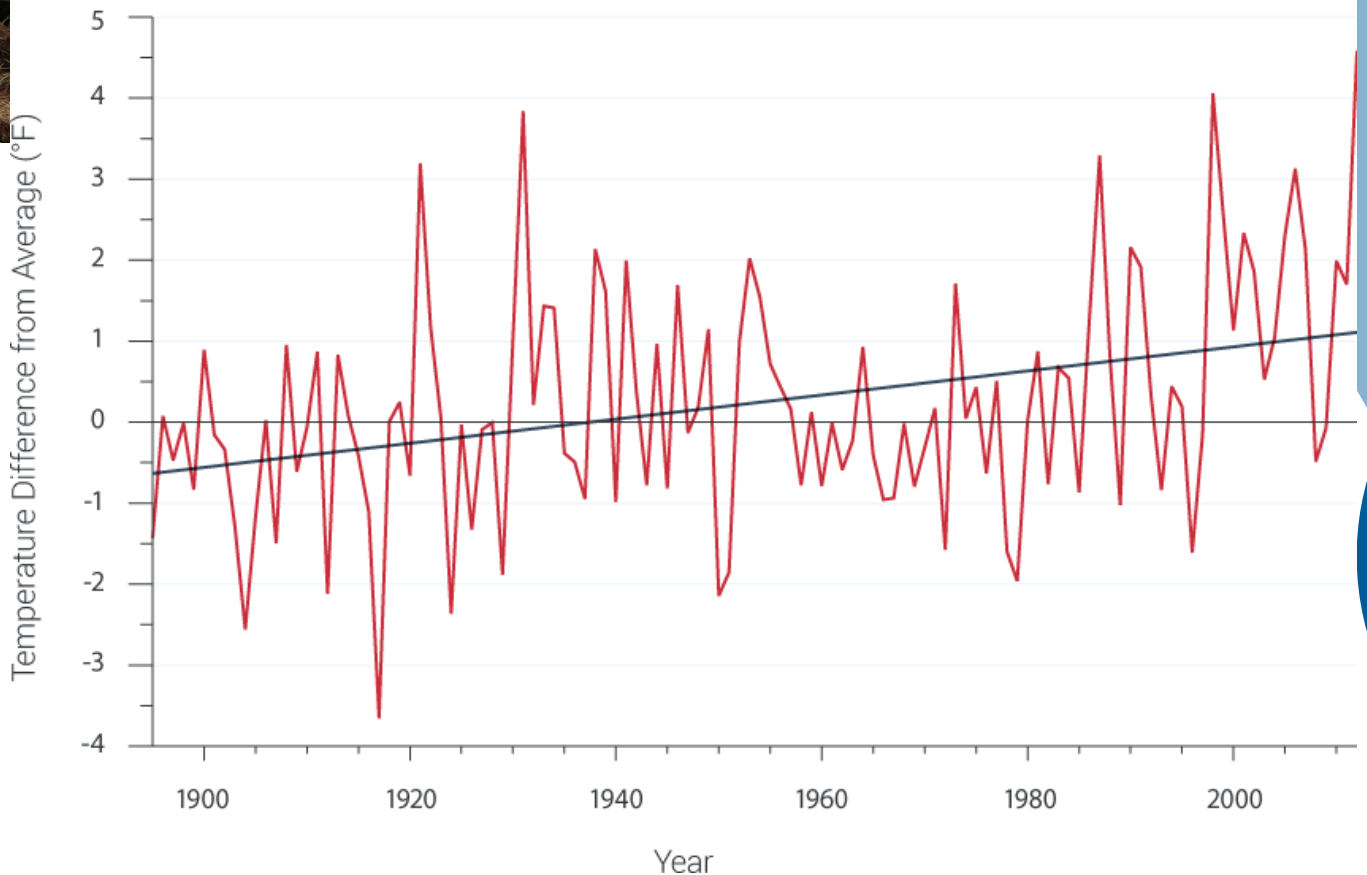
community, the EAC is currently finalizing the Bloomington-Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan (BNCESP) developed over the last several years through a collaborative community air quality planning process. The BNCESP focuses on developing strategies for carbon emissions reduction and air quality improvements. Stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives and backgrounds were instrumental in the development of the plan, and spent significant time brainstorming strategies to help combat issues contributing to climate change, carbon emissions, ozone, and other forms of air pollution.

The EAC hopes to have the draft BNCESP completed in 2023.

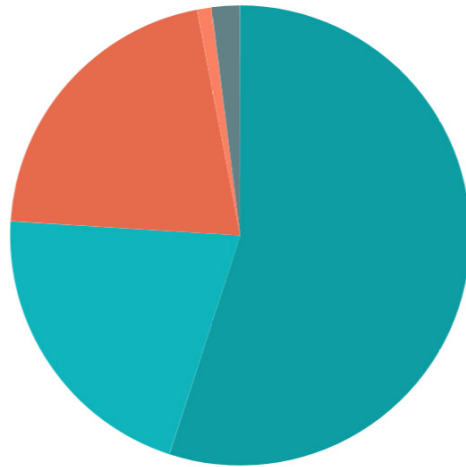
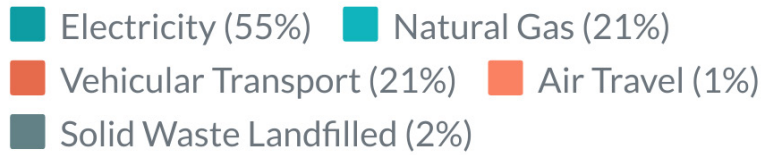
Some of the concepts contained in the plan are already well underway in our community. There are numerous programs offered by the EAC and other community organizations to increase energy efficiency and increase the adoption of renewable energy in Bloomington-Normal.

In 2020, the EAC also launched its new Tree Corps initiative, to improve future air quality by planting 10,000 trees a year in McLean County.

### Temperatures are Rising in the Midwest



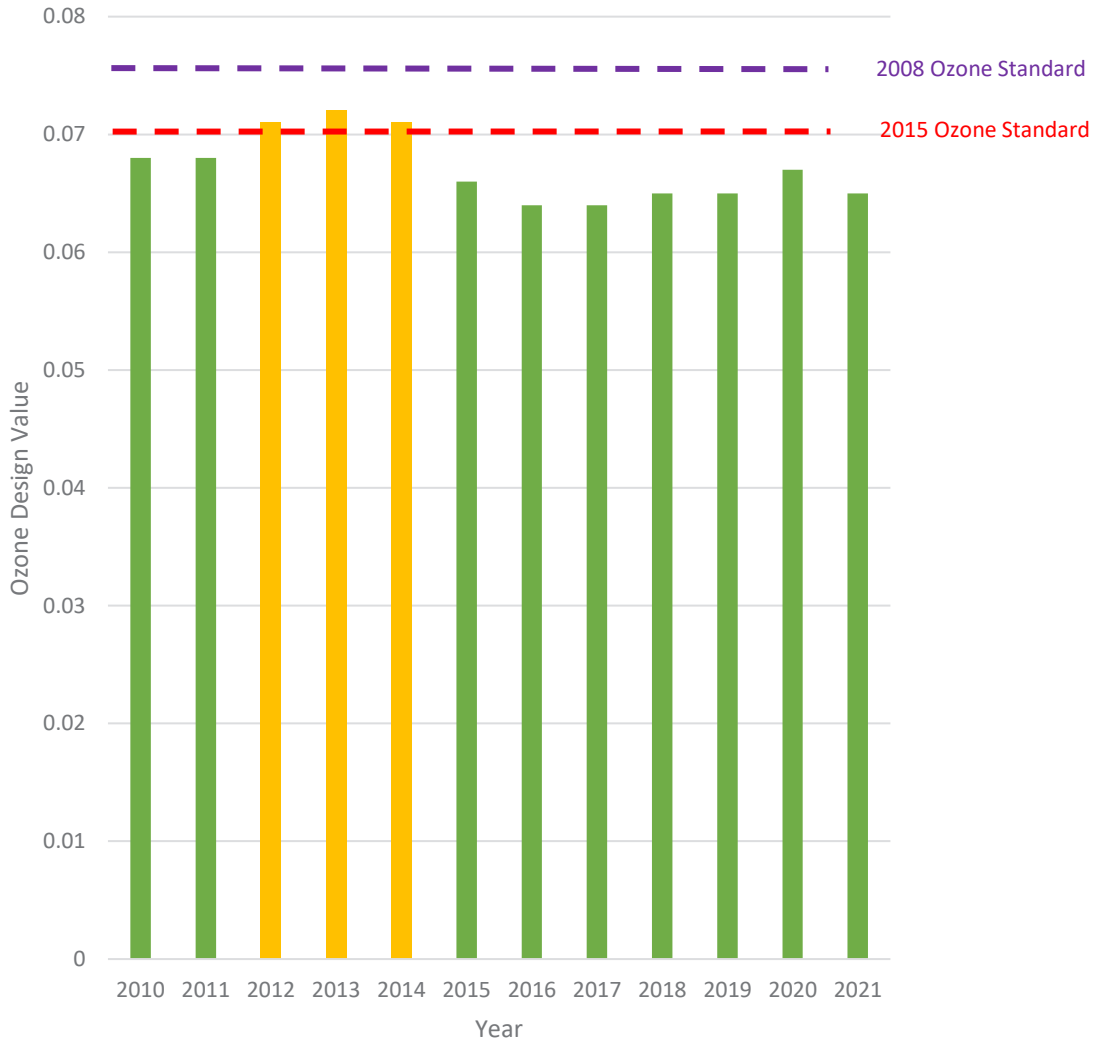
# SOURCES OF BLOOMINGTON - NORMAL COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



# BLOOMINGTON - NORMAL EMISSIONS COMPARED TO OTHER COMMUNITIES

Year of GHG inventory	City	Population	Emissions/ Capita (MT CO <sub>2</sub> e)
2015	Bloomington-Normal, IL	132,370	15.1
2013	Naperville, IL	144,779	14.4
2010	Columbia, MO	109,423	21.7
2010	Ann Arbor, MI	114,133	19.3
2021	United States	331.9 million	14.24

## Design Values for Ozone in McLean County, Illinois



Design value ozone concentrations for Bloomington-Normal. The design value is the three-year average of the fourth high concentration. Design values greater than 0.075 ppm (through 2015) and greater than . 07 ppm (2016 and after) is a violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard.

*Data courtesy of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency*

# TREE CORPS

In late 2020, the Ecology Action Center launched Tree Corps, an initiative with a goal to plant at least 100,000 new trees in Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County over the next ten years.

## Why trees?

- Trees help improve air quality. Our community is close to exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, an air quality pollutant that contributes to asthma and other respiratory diseases, negatively impacting public health.
- Trees are one of the most cost-effective strategies for carbon sequestration to help address greenhouse gas emissions.
- Trees help provide watershed protection, increase wildlife habitat, and offer opportunities for recreation areas, as demonstrated by the McLean County Greenways Plan. All trees planted through the Tree Corps are Illinois native species in order to maximize suitability for local environmental conditions and to support native pollinators and other species dependent upon native primary trophic level food supplies.
- Back in the early days of the Ecology Action Center in the 1970's and 1980's, when the organization was known as Operation Recycle, profits from recycling drives were utilized for tree planting efforts including helping to plant at Comlara Park on Evergreen Lake.

To make Tree Corps a success the EAC is building upon new and existing partnerships with local nonprofits, businesses, faith-based organizations, and governmental entities, to seek out opportunities and funding to increase tree plantings significantly in our community. In 2022, with the help of generous donations from individuals and organizations, the



**TREE CORPS**  
TREE-CORPS.ORG

hard work of our many volunteers and with the support of our major partner organizations, Heartland Community College, Parklands Foundation, Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District, Sugar Grove, Friends of the Constitution Trail, and Living Lands and Waters, we successfully planted over 10,000 native trees in McLean County in April, May, and October of 2022.

**We successfully planted over 10,000 native trees in McLean County in April, May, and October of 2022.**

This year the EAC made an effort to focus some tree plantings in parts of the Bloomington-Normal community considered Environmental Justice areas. These are areas where the combination of socio-economic and demographic factors (race, income, employment, life expectancy, and education)

and environmental indicators (particulate matter, ozone levels, air toxics cancer risk, hazardous waste proximity, traffic proximity, etc.) result in residents having more direct negative impacts from environmental degradation. Tree plantings in northwest Normal on the Heartland Community College Campus, and in southwest Bloomington at the Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District, will ensure the clean air and pollution mitigation benefits of trees will have a direct positive impact on residents living in these Environmental Justice areas.

The EAC also continued its partnership with Parklands Foundation and the Friends of the Constitution Trail, planting trees at the Parklands Mohr Preserve and Letcher Basin, and along The Constitution Trail on Route 66 near Funks Grove. This year the EAC also planted trees at Sugar Grove Nature Center.



**100**  
 sapling trees planted with  
 the help of 60 volunteers,  
 including groups from State  
 Farm and Busey Bank



**4,360**

bare root native trees planted by 73 volunteers at Heartland  
 Community College



**2,000**  
 trees planted with the help of 17  
 volunteers at Sugar Grove Nature  
 Center



**3,000**

bare root native trees planted by 60 volunteers, including  
 a group of youth from Future Farmers of America, at the  
 Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District

**600**

bare root native trees planted  
 by 49 volunteers, including  
 members of the Moses  
 Montefiore Temple, at the  
 Parklands Foundation





# CLEAN WATER

The Ecology Action Center educates the community about the negative impacts of storm water runoff pollution and provides information and resources to help people reduce their contributions to water pollution.

The EAC promotes clean water protection and watershed awareness through education and outreach programs including programs for

third grade classrooms in McLean County, the Yard Smart program, storm drain stenciling, the mCLEANwater.org watershed clearinghouse website, rain barrel workshops, an annual creek and trail clean-up event, the Sugar Creek Stewards, septic system maintenance messaging, and reminding our community to curb their leaves in the fall!



## Ecology Action Center

hosted weekly Facebook Live EAQs chats on varying topics, including clean water



# YARD SMART GARDEN WALK

The EAC held its annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on August 6, 2022. This year's event had 46 attendees. Participants visited the home gardens of Paula & Roger Wager of Normal, Marie-Suzanne Langille & David Vayo of Bloomington, and Rose & Peyton Johnson of Bloomington. The tour also featured The Herb Guild garden on the Constitution Trail at Atwood Wayside.



The Wager's have systematically removed a manageable section of turf and replaced it with native plants every year since 2012. Perennials and grasses are left throughout the winter for pollinator habitat, and there is permeable paving throughout the yard. Marie-Suzanne Langille and David Vayo call their garden La Finca Koalita, and aim to

have a cutting garden for beautiful bouquets from May through September, provide as many vegetables and herbs for their kitchen as possible, provide habitat for birds and pollinators by including native plants in the garden, and conserving resources with rain barrels and composting.



Rose & Peyton Johnson are nature and animals lovers. The purpose of their yard is to attract as wide variety of pollinators and to provide a safe foraging space for their Sulcata Tortoise, Edwin. They do not use synthetic chemicals anywhere to ensure the safety of their children, tortoise, and visiting people and wildlife. They use dried tortoise manure for



fertilizer, and Edwin helps keep the grass and weeds down by grazing!

The Herb Guild of McLean County maintains a garden space that was donated by the City of Bloomington at Atwood Wayside along the Constitution Trail. The garden contains a wide variety of plants, including prairie plants, native woodland plants, herbs, and a cutting garden.

The garden walk concluded with a presentation from the U of I Extension about bats and a zero-waste vegan lunch from Under the Ground BloNo.



# SUGAR CREEK STEWARDS

Sugar Creek Stewards is designed to raise awareness about Sugar Creek as an important community storm water system and ecosystem. The EAC works with volunteers at designated sites to improve the overall health and aesthetics of Sugar Creek through invasive species control and removal, allowing native species to thrive.

## Bloomington

- In March, eight volunteers removed invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Ewing Park II.
- In May, eight volunteers worked along the creek at Ewing Park II planting over 60 new native forbs, shrubs, and trees in areas previously cleared.
- In September, four volunteers worked at Ewing II in Bloomington, removing invasive plants and spreading native plant seeds.
- In November, two volunteers helped remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Ewing Park II in Bloomington.

## Normal

- In January, one volunteer helped seed the area cleared at Fairview Park in Normal.
- In April, two volunteers seeded and removed weeds in the area along the creek at Fairview Park in Normal.
- In June, two volunteers removed teasel at Fairview Park in Normal.
- In August, two volunteers worked at Fairview Park removing invasive plants and spreading native plant seeds.
- In October, three volunteers helped remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Fairview Park in Normal.
- In December, five volunteers worked to remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Fairview Park in Normal.



# CONSTITUTION TRAIL AND SUGAR CREEK CLEAN UP DAY

In 2022 the EAC's annual Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek Clean-Up day was held on April 23, 2022, the Saturday after Earth Day. The clean-up event focuses on the portion of the trail and Sugar Creek from the Chateau to the Audubon Gardens. 20 volunteers collected 35 bags of litter.



# RAIN BARRELS

The EAC's rain barrel workshops teach attendees about the importance of rain water catchment in preventing storm water runoff pollution. Attendees build their rain barrel, and learn how properly install and maintain it. The EAC also provide tips to transition downspouts for rain barrel usage, and information on proper winter storage.

- The EAC offered 1 rain barrel workshop to five participants where we provide rain barrel best practices and participants take home custom built 55-gallon rain barrels.
- The EAC also sold 17 ready-to-use rain barrels through the EAC online store.



# STORM DRAIN STENCILING

The Ecology Action Center welcomes groups of volunteers to participate in storm drain stenciling in the community. Volunteers spray stencils next to storm drains that say “Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean”, marking every stenciled drain with a GPS tracker, and distributing door hangers in the neighborhood that educate residents on what storm water pollution is and ways households can reduce their contributions to it.

## Bloomington

- 7 volunteers from State Farm stenciled 57 storm drains and distributed 176 door hangers around the Founders Grove neighborhood in Bloomington.
- 15 volunteer Boy Scouts from Troop 19 stenciled 106 drains and distributed 389 door hangers throughout the Tipton Park neighborhood.

## Normal

- 6 volunteers from Paul Mitchell School stenciled 44 storm drains and distributed 166 door hangers on Fell and Broadway between Vernon and Division streets.
- 6 volunteers stenciled 38 storm drains and distributed 135 door hangers around Beech street in Normal.
- 10 volunteers from Heartland Community college stenciled 38 storm drains and distributed 231 door hangers on Mariana and North Parkside in Normal.



LOCAL&STATE

# Ex-AG Holder to speak at Peoria MLK luncheon

**CONNOR WOOD**  
connor.wood@pea.net  
PEORIA — The first Black U.S. Attorney General will speak in Peoria in January for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration Luncheon.



Holder

Eric Holder was appointed attorney general in 2009 by President Barack Obama. He served until April 2015. During his time in office, and since, he has been a leader in civil rights, including voting rights, according to a statement from Public Employees for Community Concerns, which is hosting the event. Holder's first book, co-written with Sam Koppelman, is titled "Our Unfinished March: The Violent Past and Imperiled Future of the Vote — A History, a Crisis, and a Plan." It came out in May and offers a history of voting in the U.S. The 31st MLK Celebration Luncheon is scheduled for Jan. 16, 2023, at the Peoria Civic Center. Tickets are \$60 per person or \$600 for a table of 10 and can be bought at [www.mlkmlk.com](http://www.mlkmlk.com) or the City Clerk's office in Peoria City Hall. Doors for the event open at 11 a.m. and the luncheon begins at noon.

Contact Connor Wood at (309)820-3240. Follow Connor on Twitter: @connorwood

# Coroner IDs teen killed in crash

**BRENDAN DENISON**  
brendan.denison@pea.net  
NORMAL — The McLean County Coroner's Office has named the teenager who died Saturday afternoon in a single-vehicle crash in Normal.

A joint press release from the coroner's office and the Normal Police Department stated Austin McKee, 18, of Normal, was pronounced dead at the scene of the crash. It happened at 4:46 p.m. on North Main Street at Kerrick Road. The press release said McKee died from head injuries received from the truck he was in



COMMUNITY NETWORK CENTER  
HARTFORD TROOP  
FOOD FOREST  
SHARED LINK  
ADDS

# KEEPING IT CLEAN

BSA Troop 19 assistant senior patrol leader Eli Moore lifts up a stencil at Degarmo Drive and Stone Mountain Boulevard on Monday after spray painting to help educate about clean water and storm drains. Ten members of Troop 19 participated in this service project Monday, with help from the Ecology Action Center.

CLAY JACKSON PHOTOS, THE PANTAGRAPH



...u clean water and storm drains.





# ENERGY

BN Energy Bright is a community energy program designed to increase energy efficiency for homes and businesses in Bloomington-Normal through professional low-cost energy assessments, personalized assessment reports for participants, and through a variety of educational information in the form of presentations, outreach events and a comprehensive website.

BN Energy Bright is in partnership with the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington, in conjunction with their municipal aggregation programs, to help further reduce the community's overall energy demand.

In 2022, EAC staff completed 36 home energy consultations for Bloomington and Normal residents, and provided detailed energy efficiency



and solar consultations via phone and email to an additional 26 Bloomington-Normal residents.

The EAC also provided consultation to the Bloomington Public Library and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal.

Based on figures from the Department of Energy, if residents implement the majority of the easier to accomplish efficiency recommendations (sealing air leaks, setting their thermostat back



**36**  
home energy  
consultations



**\$19,980**  
total estimated  
energy savings  
of participating  
households in the first  
year



**470**  
people reached through  
presentations, events,  
and phone inquiries



**207,842**  
interactions through  
media coverage, ads,  
social media and the  
EAC website

**“ BN Energy Bright is a community energy program designed to increase energy efficiency for homes and businesses in Bloomington-Normal. ”**

7-10° for 8 hours a day, replacing frequently used light fixtures with LED bulbs, lower water heating temperature, insulating hot water pipes) they can save a low estimate of \$555 annually on energy costs. Using these figures, participating households cumulatively saved as much as \$19,980 in energy savings in the first year after implementation. The average Illinois household uses 129 million BTUs of energy per year. Based on the energy equivalents of the monetary savings estimates above,

implementing the basic efficiency recommendations means a savings of 34.6 million BTU per household. This is the equivalent to removing 34.6 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per household.

BN Energy Bright has reached over 470 members of the community through presentations, events and phone inquiries, and had an additional 207,208 interactions through media coverage, advertisements, social media, and our website.

# ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL

In 2022, the Ecology Action Center finished its third year and was awarded a contract to begin a fourth year as a grassroots educator. The Ecology Action Center is one of ten non-profits in the state to serve as grassroots educators for the Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) program. ILSFA is part of the state's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) designed to increase access to solar energy for income-qualifying residents, environmental justice communities, and non-profits and public facilities that serve low-income communities.

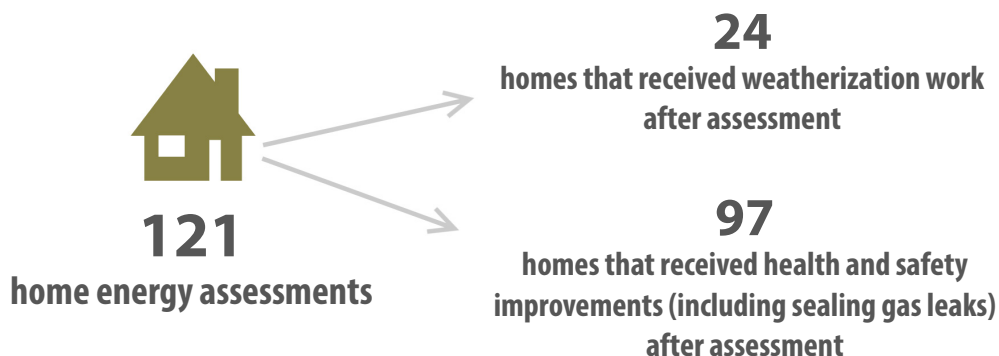


The EAC gave informational presentations about ILSFA to residents at the Habitat for Humanity, the Immigration Project, the Bloomington Housing Authority, the Normal Township Activity and Recreation Center, the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District, and the Bloomington Public Library. EAC also had 52 individual conversations with residents interested in the program.

# AMEREN-NICOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY PILOT PROGRAM

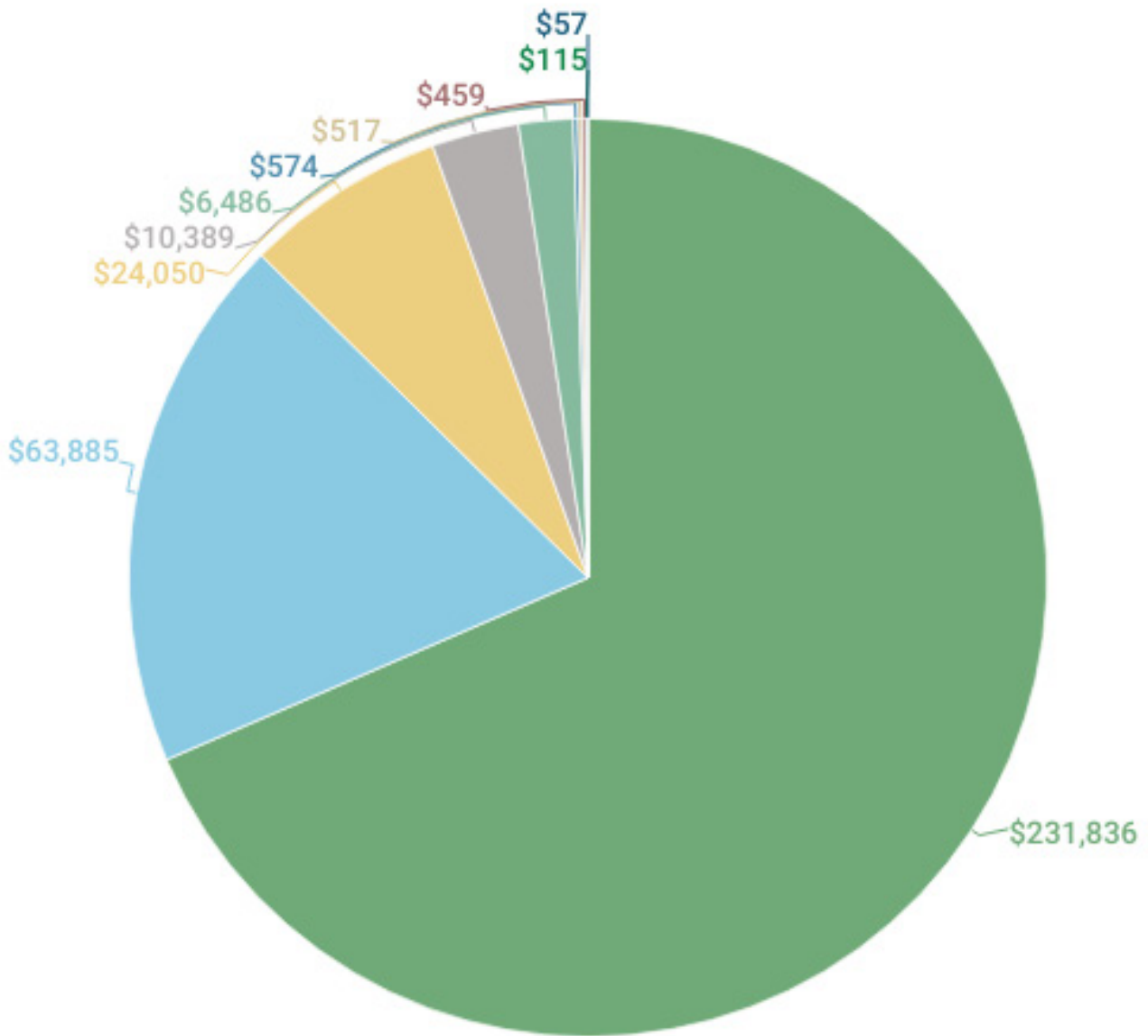
EAC was selected to help with community outreach to promote the Ameren-Nicor pilot program which aims to provide free home energy audits and air-sealing and weatherization upgrades for income-qualifying (80% AMI) households in Bloomington-Normal that are serviced by Ameren and Nicor.

The EAC continued to connect residents with the opportunity, connecting 119 residents to this program. According to program managers, the EAC is the leading pipeline for this program.





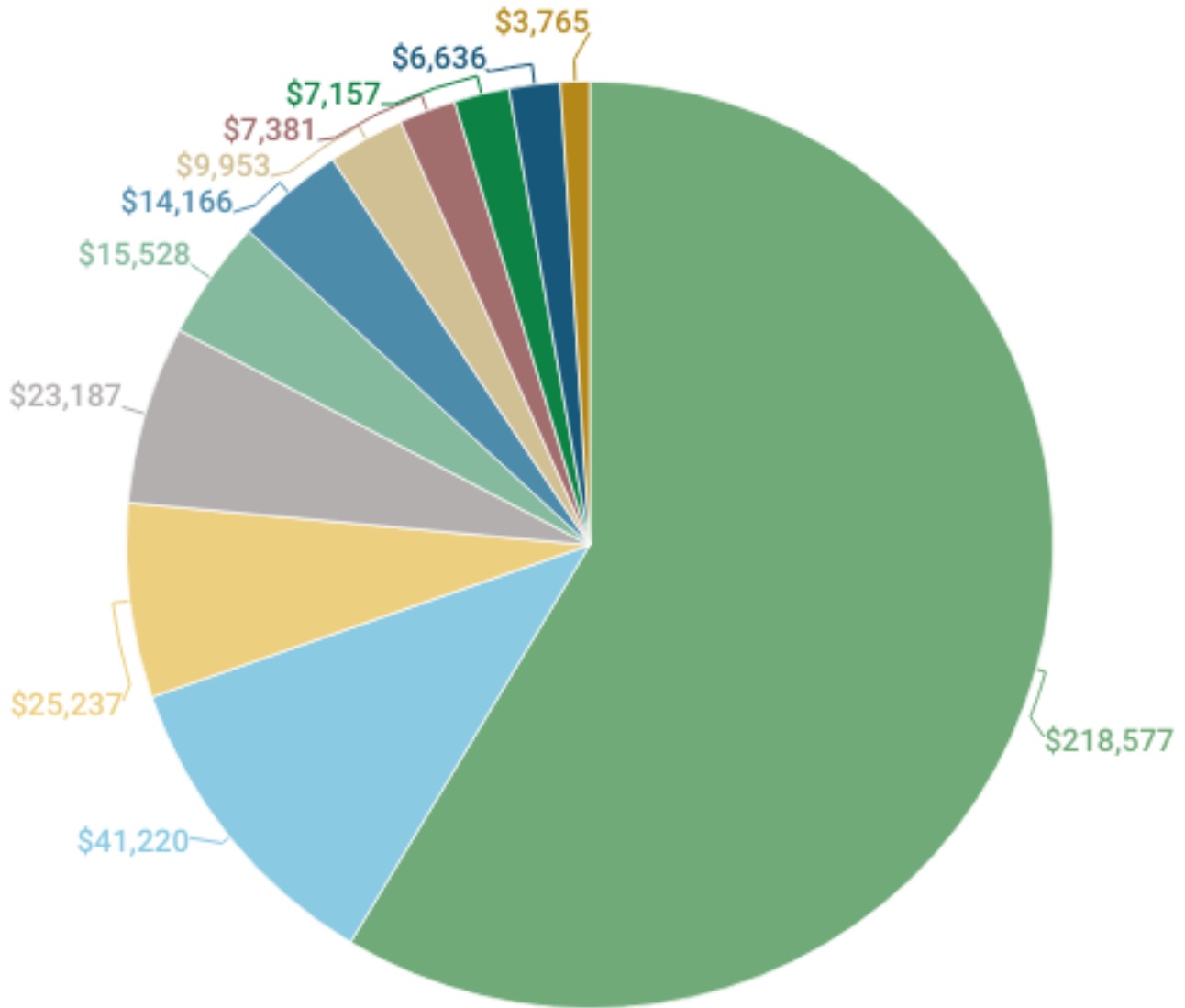
# 2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: REVENUE



- Program Fees
- Contributions
- Annual Giving
- Merchandise
- Reimbursements
- Sponsorships
- Referral Income
- Fundraisers
- Interest
- Other

**Total revenue for 2022**  
**\$338,368**

# 2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: EXPENSES



- Payroll ● Supplies ● Professional Fees ● Marketing
- Miscellaneous ● Insurance ● Printing ● Web/IT ● Utilities
- Office Equipment ● Conference and Training

**Total expenses for 2022**  
**\$372,807**

# 2022 FUNDERS & SPONSORS

## PUBLIC AGENCIES

- Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District
- City of Bloomington
- McLean County
- Town of Normal
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

## BUSINESS & PRIVATE SUPPORTERS

- AB Hatchery
- StraightUp Solar
- Normandy Village
- Zimmerman & Armstrong Investment Advisors
- Resource Innovations
- Better Earth Logistics
- State Farm Foundation
- Country Financial
- Republic Services
- Busey Bank

## NON-PROFIT SPONSORS & PARTNERS

- Bloomington-Normal NAACP
- Habitat for Humanity
- West Bloomington Revitalization Project
- ParkLands Foundation
- Midwest Renewable Energy Association
- Illinois Prairie Wild Ones
- The Nature Conservancy
- Elevate
- YWCA McLean County
- Friends of the Constitution Trail
- U of I Extension Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners
- Trees Forever
- Living Lands and Waters
- Illinois Prairie Community Foundation
- New Covenant Community Church
- First Presbyterian Church

## 2022 TREE TEAMS

- Normal First United Methodist Green Team
- Moses Montefiore Temple
- New Covenant Community
- Normal Future Farmers of America
- EAC Board of Directors
- Compeer Financial
- Larissa Armstrong's Birthday Tree Fundraiser
- Goverdhan Galpalli

# ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER STAFF



**Michael Brown**  
Executive Director



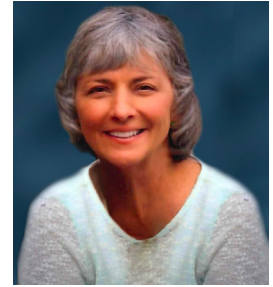
**Larissa Armstrong**  
Assistant Director



**Katie Vogler**  
Education Coordinator



**Eric Marshall**  
Program Assistant



**Deborah Pitcher**  
Development Coordinator



**Gary Kamplain**  
Program Assistant



**Riley Francis**  
Program Assistant



**Angela Bossard**  
Administrative  
Assistant



**Nate Bair**  
Sugar Creek  
Stewardship Coordinator



**Kelsey Bremmer**  
Program Technician

## 2022-2023 Board of Directors

Mike O'Grady—President and  
Ex-officio McLean County

Jay Ivers—Vice President

Carl Teichman—Past President

Nancy Armstrong—Treasurer

Charles Bristow—Secretary

Jason Comfort—Ex-officio  
Normal

Kevin Kothe—Ex-officio  
Bloomington

Myra Gordon

Kari Sandhaas

Joan Brehm

Steve Kowalski

Vince Allen

Elisabeth Reed

Ben Ryburn

George Gordon

Wayne Aldrich

Goverdhan Galpalli

Laurie Wollrab

Hannah Eisner

Kevin Callis

Rachael Lund

Tim Golliday



**ECOLOGY**  
ACTION CENTER

**Location:** 202 W. College Ave., Normal, Illinois 61761

**Mailing address:** PO Box 97, Normal, Illinois 61761

**Phone:** 309-454-3169 **Website:** [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org)