



**Metro
Blooms**

GROW. BLOOM. INSPIRE!

2023 Impact Report



**Metro
Blooms**
GROW. BLOOM. INSPIRE!

Mission Partner with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges

Strategic Areas of Focus

Diversity, Equity,
& Inclusion

Design + Build for
Healthy Resilient
Lands & Water

Community
Relations,
Engagement &
Inspiration

Broaden Geographic Reach

Organizational Identities
& Interconnections

Education &
Community
Resources

Partnerships in Community -
Strong Interconnected
Partnerships

Financial Sustainability
& Accountability





Our educational program
and a statewide
public/private partnership



Our technical expertise in
landscape design, install, and
landcare



Community is at the root of our work. In 2023, we grew partnerships with communities that have experienced environmental injustice, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color, low-income and rental communities. Together, we created healthier and more climate-resilient outdoor spaces that provide native habitat for pollinators and protect clean water, while centering the priorities of residents.

We connected to each other and nature. We also offered paid opportunities for people to be part of the work, installing and planting gardens, or joining Sustainable Landcare Training to gain highly-sought skills in caring for rain gardens, native plantings and other green infrastructure.

We shared knowledge — through workshops, at events, with free “how-to” resources and grant opportunities — so that individuals are supported to make their outdoor spaces more resilient.



2023 Outcomes

- More than **5,900 people** engaged with our programs.
- Rain gardens installed through community programs capture and clean more than **2 millions gallons of stormwater** annually.
- We planted **37,000 native plants** in our community programs.



Rich, Co-Director of Design (left), discussing plans for a new park with Riverside Plaza community members

A new park at Riverside Plaza

Over several years, we've installed three large rain gardens at Riverside Plaza, a large rental complex in Cedar-Riverside, Minneapolis. The rain gardens help keep the nearby Mississippi River clean. In response to community input, in 2023 we completed a small park where residents can sit outside in nature in the heart of their city neighborhood. Residents were paid for their help at two paid planting events.



Planting a large rain garden at Riverside Plaza. The rain garden diverts and soaks in 235,412 gallons of rainwater annually.

Working Towards Environmental Justice

Partnering with rental communities

Everybody has a right to clean air, land, and water. At Metro Blooms, we inspire action and reduce barriers with climate-resilient practices like rain gardens, healthy tree canopies, and native pollinator plantings. We carry out our work using principles of equitable engagement and environmental justice. We intentionally partner with communities most impacted by environmental injustice, including BIPOC, low-income, and rental communities.

In 2023, we partnered with five rental communities on projects that incorporate more environmentally sustainable practices. Our projects include community priorities like places to gather and play, and opportunities for paid work. Our environmental and social justice advocates engaged with residents at events and by door knocking. Residents were part of decision-making; they worked alongside us planning and getting projects in the ground.

Thank you, Jordan Area Community Council and Riverside Plaza Tenants' Association, for your partnership!

>400

participating
community
members

14,170

native plants
planted



Fall at Flowers That Beam Community Garden

"Flowers That Beam"

We worked with Beam Apartments residents in North Minneapolis to turn a vacant lot into a mini-park.

- Features: native plant pollinator gardens, fruit trees, nature play elements, benches, lighting, bike racks.
- With residents, we planted 886 plants during two paid community planting days.
- The park was named Flowers That Beam Community Garden following a naming contest.



Makayla, Environmental and Social Justice Advocate, presents design to Beam residents. Design elements were based on resident feedback.



Engaging with City of Lakes Community Land Trust homeowners

We provided two workshops on sustainable gardening and yard care for homeowners connected with the City of Lakes Community Land Trust (CLCLT). The land trust helps people become homeowners and provides ongoing support beyond the home purchase. A CLCLT homeowner volunteered her yard for the workshops.

"Not only am I giving my house that elevated appeal, with having those native plants, I'm helping the planet, helping the environment,"

— Esther, a CLCLT workshop attendee

Working Towards Environmental Justice

Connecting with Community



Laila, Jaiden and Makayla (facing forward), from our Community Relations team, talking pollinators with youth.



We redistribute program funding through paid work opportunities for community residents and contracts with local businesses and organizations. We redistributed **20%** of funding in 2023, up from 9% in 2022.



Winter seed sowing workshop at Heritage Park Apartments

Native plants can be expensive. We offered a workshop on sowing native seed in milk jugs during winter with youth from Green Garden Bakery at Heritage Park Apartments in Minneapolis. The idea is for seeds to sprout into seedlings in time for spring planting!





Ab, Sustainable Landcare Manager

Landcare, maintenance + inspection services

Our Design+Build team has a well-developed program in sustainable landcare of commercial-scale properties, with expertise in stormwater practices and care of native plants. Staff draw on real-world field experience to teach SLC participants and workshop attendees. They also mentor interns.



Sustainable Landcare Training session

Sustainable Landcare Training

Creating pathways to green careers

We're growing a local workforce and creating job and education pathways in the environmental field.

Sustainable Landcare training (SLC) prepares people with job-ready skills in caring for and inspecting green infrastructure practices. Participants are paid, and learn about stormwater basics, native plants, installing and caring for green infrastructure, and more. They also explore environmental justice. Following training, some SLC “graduates” took on paid work inspecting stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in Minneapolis.



“The city’s not going to stop putting in rain gardens or stormwater management practices,” Jillian said. “To be on the front end, to be one of the people who know about this, is exciting to me. It’s not necessarily about the work we’re doing now, even though that’s worked out great. It’s about what this could turn into.” — Jillian, an SLC participant and stormwater BMP inspector



SLC graduates trained City of Minneapolis staff on reporting on BMPs.



Learning rain garden vegetation maintenance

52

Participants who completed SLC program

11

Post-training, SLC participants hired to inspect stormwater BMPs

422

Stormwater BMPs inspected by SLC graduates

\$22,509

Funds raised from Give to the Max Day 2023 for SLC training



200+
Volunteers who
helped plant

15,600
Native plants in
the ground!

Turf to Pollinator Gardens

We're partnering with Wilderness in the City to create six pollinator gardens in Twin Cities Metro parks. Park visitors will get ideas for how to plant native plants in their yards to support pollinators. Volunteers planted!



Jennifer, Co-Director of Design



Our Design+Build team completed **118** designs and installed **28** projects, among them 7 commercial or multi-family residential projects.

Creating Native Plant Habitat

Community outreach, sharing resources

Lawns to Legumes



Minnesotans received individual grants to plant native pollinator habitat at their homes. Through Blue Thumb, we managed the program for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and provided resources to help people get projects in the ground.

61	2,496	4,124
Total acres of native pollinator habitat planted	Projects completed	Pollinator-friendly trees /shrubs planted



Blue Thumb at the Minnesota State Fair

Some **10,000** people stopped by to see us at the Great Minnesota Get-Together! One popular item: our flower-faces-on-a-stick.

Make Your Yard More Resilient.



457
Workshop
registrants

4,479
Online
learning series
registrants

DIY workshops and online learning

We reached hundreds of DIYers with **20** Resilient Yards workshops. For people who want to learn at their own pace, we debuted our free Resilient Yards Online Learning Series.



Blue Thumb website resources

The Blue Thumb website provides a trove of free resources, from how to plant for pollinators to designing a rain garden to turf alternatives, and much more. There were more than **27,000** resource downloads in 2023!



Clean Water Action

Rain Gardens

Blooming Boulevards

This program transformed residential boulevards in North Minneapolis neighborhoods into rain gardens that provide habitat for pollinators. Through door-knocking and other outreach, we engaged with residents on how rain gardens help clean water and native plants support pollinators. Our design team provided designs for participants.

Some highlights

- We worked with a community crew from All Nations Youth and Community Assistance Program, trained in Sustainable Landcare Training, to care for existing Blooming Boulevards and plant new ones.
- We partnered with artist Charles Caldwell on a blooming boulevard near Caldwell’s “All Seasons” community mural in North Minneapolis.



“They cleaned up the area and replanted with plants that attracted pollinators—butterflies, bees and birds. They also provided light work for community members with pay and was perfect to work with. I recommend Metro Blooms to anyone who would like to have an amazing experience.” — Charles Caldwell, artist

Neighborhood of Rain Gardens

Neighborhood of Rain Gardens makes it easier for residents in participating neighborhoods and cities to add a rain garden in their yard. Conservation Corps MN & Iowa, one of our partners, provides crews paid for by the Clean Water Fund, helping to lower residents' costs and reduce practical challenges like excavating soil. Typically, residents do their own planting.

50	15,558	806,650
Projects installed	Square feet native plantings	Gallons stormwater runoff diverted annually

30	7,584	665,670
Projects installed	Square feet native habitat planted	Gallons stormwater runoff diverted annually





Alexandra, who manages Turf to Pollinator Gardens



Thank you!

Together, we made outdoor spaces more resilient and helped connect people to nature and each other.

Our work is made possible by many, many partners including community groups, public and private funders, governmental entities, foundations, business sponsors, and by individual donors. We are grateful to the volunteers and residents who work alongside us!



Jaiden, Environmental and Social Justice Coordinator



"A Metro Blooms" fundraiser at the Bell Museum



Some of our staff and board members



Sign created by a Blooming Boulevard participant

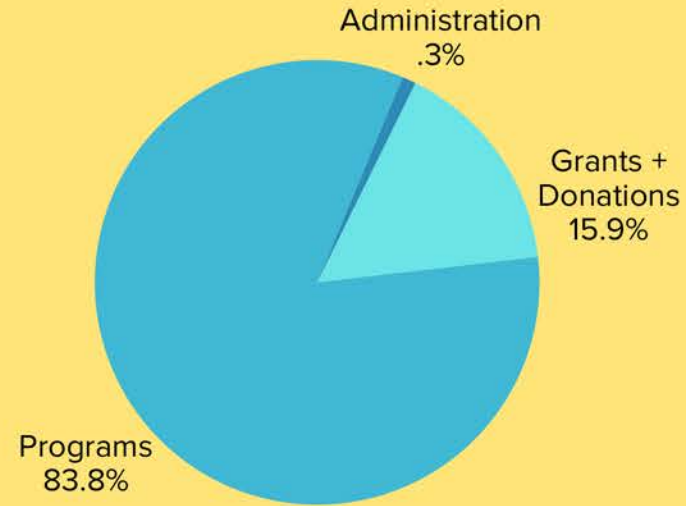
35	108	556	\$84,301
Monthly Donors	New donors	Total number of individual gifts	Total funds raised by individual donors



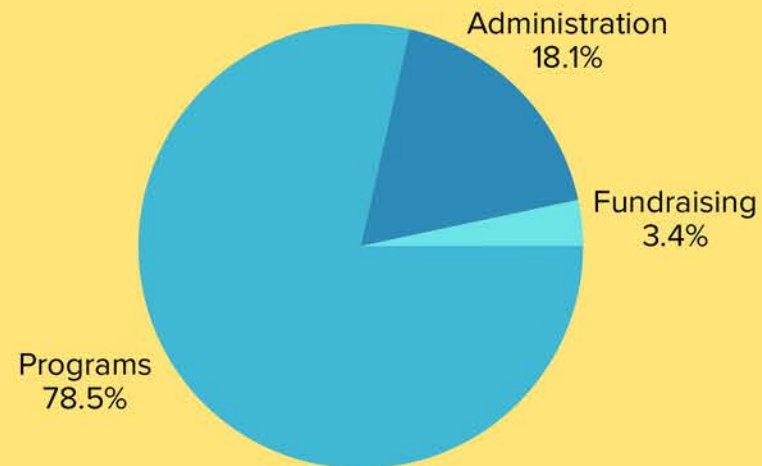
Learning about pollinators

2023 FINANCIALS

Consolidated Revenue: \$2,226,506



Consolidated Expense: \$2,206,470



Consolidated financials for Metro Blooms, Metro Blooms Design+Build and Metro Blooms Property LLC

LEADERSHIP

Laura Scholl, Executive Director

Directors

Erin Bogle
Jennifer Ehlert
Jennifer Foth
John Bly
Rich Harrison



GOVERNANCE

Carol Kuechler, Chair, Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Alex Kim
Bendu Teage-Kollie
Catherine Menick
Dan Jaker
Jeanette Boit-Kania
John Kinara
Norman Greenberg
Randy Rau
Steph Jacobs
Todd Carreño
Travis Thein
*Stephanie Hatzenbihler, Blue Thumb Liaison



Metro Blooms Design+Build LLC offers design, build and landcare services. Our D+B team's landscape designers and crews provide technical expertise for community projects and education programming.



Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.

Ecological health | Environmental justice | Education | Inspiration | Community engagement | Partnership



Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water is Metro Blooms' education program and a partnership of local governments, and private companies promoting practices that protect pollinators and improve clean water, including planting natives, rain gardens and shoreline stabilization.