



ecoRise

IMPACT REPORT

2024

EcoRise inspires a new generation of leaders to design a sustainable future for all.

The climate crisis is altering our world, and young people are growing up in an era of increasing uncertainty about their future. Engaging the next generation with environmental education equips students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate and thrive in a rapidly changing world after high school. As a K–12 education leader, EcoRise cultivates critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and passionate advocates who are prepared to address the complex challenges of climate change and environmental injustice.

Our programs transform schools into incubators for social change, elevate youth voices, and advance student-led solutions to real-world challenges. We offer a range of youth and teacher experiences designed to advance environmental literacy, climate justice, and sustainable communities.

Our programs include:

-  **Teacher Professional Development**
-  **Standards-Aligned Curricula**
-  **Green Career Exploration**
-  **Student Innovation Fund**
-  **Community Connections**
-  **Civic Engagement**



Our Vision

We believe that K–12 education demands radical transformation centered in climate justice. Students spend over 14,000 hours in K–12 classrooms in the United States but receive an average of only 2 hours of climate education per year^{1,2}. EcoRise provides resources to ensure youth are prepared to lead the way to a more sustainable and just future. Our work is guided by our current strategic, three-year plan, Vision 2025, which emphasizes these impact areas:

ELEVATING YOUTH VOICES

With a focus on civic engagement and green career pathways, EcoRise is providing opportunities for a diverse network of student leaders to influence environmental policy, cultivate climate resilience, and participate in the new green economy.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

EcoRise is enriching and expanding our K–12 offerings with an emphasis on customized teacher support that advances local community action and environmental justice.

ADVANCING SYSTEMS CHANGE

Through strategic partnerships, data, and technology, EcoRise aims to accelerate the movement for climate resilience and equity in K–12 schools and build coalitions at the district, state, and national levels.

BUILDING A THRIVING ORGANIZATION

EcoRise invests in the growth of our team and programs through continuous reflection and data-informed improvements with a deep commitment to building an inclusive, diverse organization that advances equity both internally and externally.



Our Team

From a team of two beginning in 2008 to a team of eighteen in 2024, EcoRise continues to thoughtfully grow our programs across the U.S. with a group of mission-driven leaders who bring deep experience in formal and informal education, community building, environmental sustainability, and design. Our team is geographically distributed in communities across the United States to support our work nationally.

[Meet Our Team](#)

[Meet Our Board of Directors](#)

[Meet Our Advisory Council](#)

This year, our Board of Directors approved a new leadership structure for the organization, appointing Abby Randall to join Jonathan Stott as Co-Executive Director. Shared leadership brings more perspectives to organizational decision-making and improves organizational health and sustainability. Read more about this exciting milestone [here](#).

Our Values





“EcoRise has given me the resources and platform to bring sustainability and environmental justice into every single lesson. At year end, I am amazed at how thoughtful and committed my students have become regarding their impact on the world around them. I’m so proud to see them graduate as empowered, inclusive, and compassionate stewards of our future!”

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, KATY, TX

Dear Community,

EcoRise is thrilled to share our 2024 Impact Report with you, which highlights the myriad ways we are collectively advancing climate education, environmental justice, youth leadership, and systems change. Throughout the 2023–2024 school year, in schools across the nation, EcoRise youth and educators have innovated, persevered, and inspired like never before. For example, Teacher Ambassador Laura Berenguer’s high school students in South Florida are advancing food justice in their community by planting edible gardens that can be maintained and harvested by classmates who use wheelchairs or have other access needs. In Austin, Texas, middle school student Cyril is helping his school community sort waste with a machine learning program he created, which identifies objects as recycling, compost, or trash. Community-based partners, such as Galveston’s Own Farmers Market and Youth Rebuilding New Orleans, hosted 44 high school Green Careers Academy interns; they gained career experience in a wide variety of sustainability fields while collaborating to advance environmental justice and sustainability in their communities.

Internally, our remote team has continued to flourish and grow. We welcomed three new staff members and six new board members—including our first youth alumni—from five different states as we work to ensure that our team reflects the communities that we serve. EcoRise’s newly minted shared leadership model has propelled our work forward, leveraging both Co-Executive Directors’ unique strengths, ambitions, networks, and perspectives. We both feel newly energized by the Co-ED model, and as we look to the next school year, we are excited to engage a wide range of stakeholders in a year-long strategic planning process to dream boldly about what is next for EcoRise and the field of environmental education.


As we enter the final year of Vision 2025, EcoRise is on track to meet or exceed every goal in our strategic plan. Our leading-edge team is elevating youth voices through climate action and green workforce development, reaching more educators with innovative and customized climate education and environmental justice resources, advancing systems change from coast to coast, and continuing to foster an inclusive and thriving staff and board.

Thank you to the entire EcoRise community—including our educators, students, partners, and funders—for your continued commitment and support.


Together, #WeRise!

Abby Randall & Jonathan Stott
Co-Executive Directors, EcoRise

Our Programs




Teacher Ambassador Program
Supports teacher leaders in developing leadership and facilitation skills to champion sustainability education in their communities



Green Building Academy
Offers green building education, field experiences, green career exposure, and the opportunity for educators and students to take the LEED Green Associate™ Exam and gain a professional credential



Youth Climate Councils
Engages youth in local climate resilience efforts through extra-curricular education, monthly convenings, community-connected partnerships, and advocacy projects



Gen:Thrive
Creates shared data and mapping tools to accelerate sustainability and environmental education programs in K-12 schools



Sustainable Intelligence Program
Pairs hands-on curriculum with engaging professional development experiences and microgrants to turn students' green ideas into reality



School As A Teaching Tool
Provides modernizing schools with curriculum, staff development, and grants to connect student learning to the built environment and foster a culture of sustainability in partnership with architecture and design firms



Green Careers Academy
Provides high school students with immersive, work-based learning experiences through paid internships with local organizations and professional networking opportunities



Project-Based Learning Academy
Trains teachers to transform passive learning into active participation and link multidisciplinary programs with sustainability education


Our Curricula



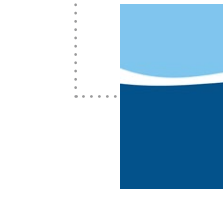
Sustainable Intelligence
Builds a foundation of environmental literacy and sustainability knowledge across seven eco-themes: water, waste, food, energy, air, public spaces, and transportation



Introduction to Climate Resilience
Creates a foundational understanding of climate resilience, climate justice, community care, and civic action in the face of climate change




Sustainable Transportation
Explores sustainable transportation, its link to equity and environmental justice, and investigation of these topics in our local communities



Understanding Our Water Footprint
Brings a global perspective to water conservation education and cultivates an understanding of indirect water use




Green Building Lessons
Provides an understanding of green building techniques, sustainability, and climate resiliency; also offers a pathway to take the LEED Green Associate™ Exam to gain a valuable professional credential



Introduction to Environmental Justice
Creates a foundational understanding of environmental justice history and concepts and encourages students to explore their roles in undoing harm caused by racist behaviors, policies, and systems



The Business of Social Good
Introduces principles of social entrepreneurship, sustainability, and design thinking and challenges students to develop a business idea that improves society or the planet




Biomimicry and Science
Challenges chemistry, physics, and biology students to look at nature as a mentor in solving sustainability challenges



Design Studio
Guides students to develop and implement creative solutions to pressing problems by using EcoRise's design-thinking process

Included with our flagship curriculum

New This Year



Climate Education Teacher Courses
Preps educators with the knowledge, confidence, and resources to incorporate climate education into their curricula and classrooms

Explore the Courses

EcoRise began offering cohort-based teacher education courses at the end of 2023 to support teachers in equipping the next generation with the knowledge and skills to take on the climate crisis. The courses were originally developed by Presidio Graduate School. EcoRise was selected to receive the program through a highly competitive evaluation process and has evolved the courses to include more resources and leading-edge instructional practices for our teachers. This school year, we had 177 educators register for one or more of the three courses we offer.

NEW COURSE CATALOG

Our curriculum platform got a major makeover this year! The new EcoRise Course Catalog makes accessing and using EcoRise's award-winning, standards-aligned lessons easier than ever. Check it out and share learn.ecorise.org with teachers who would appreciate our environmental education resources.

EXPLORING GREEN CAREERS

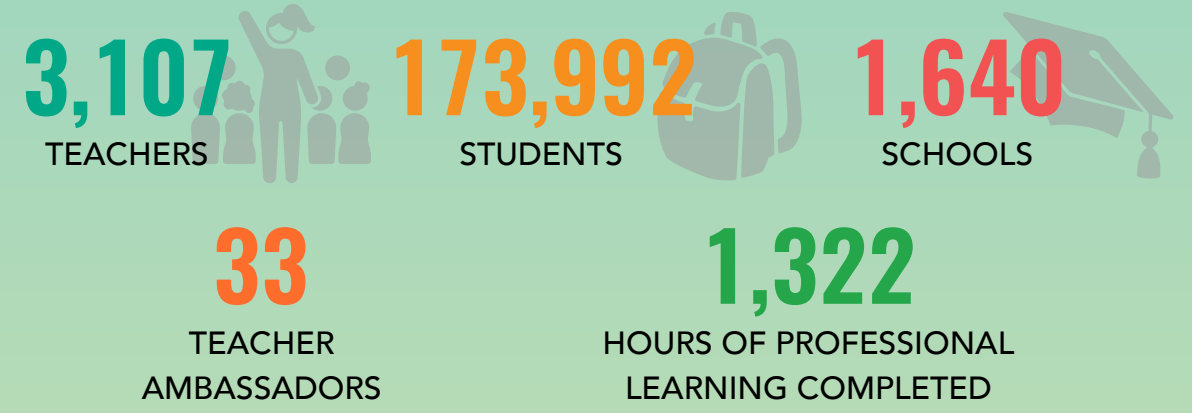
The shift to a green economy is expected to create 24 million jobs by 2030. Our new Green Careers for a Sustainable Future Lesson, a part of our Sustainable Intelligence curriculum, activates middle and high school students to explore and connect the UN Sustainable Development Goals, green careers, and their own values and interests.



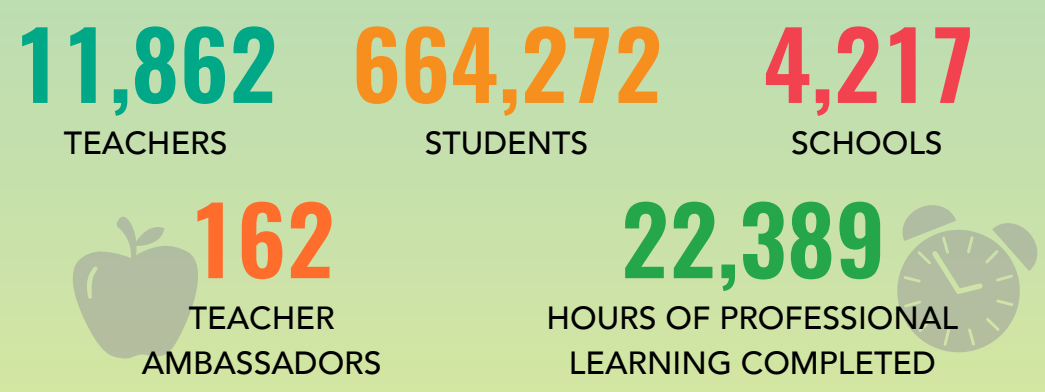
**ECORISE PROGRAMS
ARE USED IN ALL 50 U.S.
STATES & 39 OTHER COUNTRIES!**

STATES WITH HIGH-IMPACT PROGRAMMING
Arizona • California • Florida • Georgia • Louisiana
New Jersey • New York • Oklahoma • Texas • Washington, DC

THIS YEAR, WE SERVED:



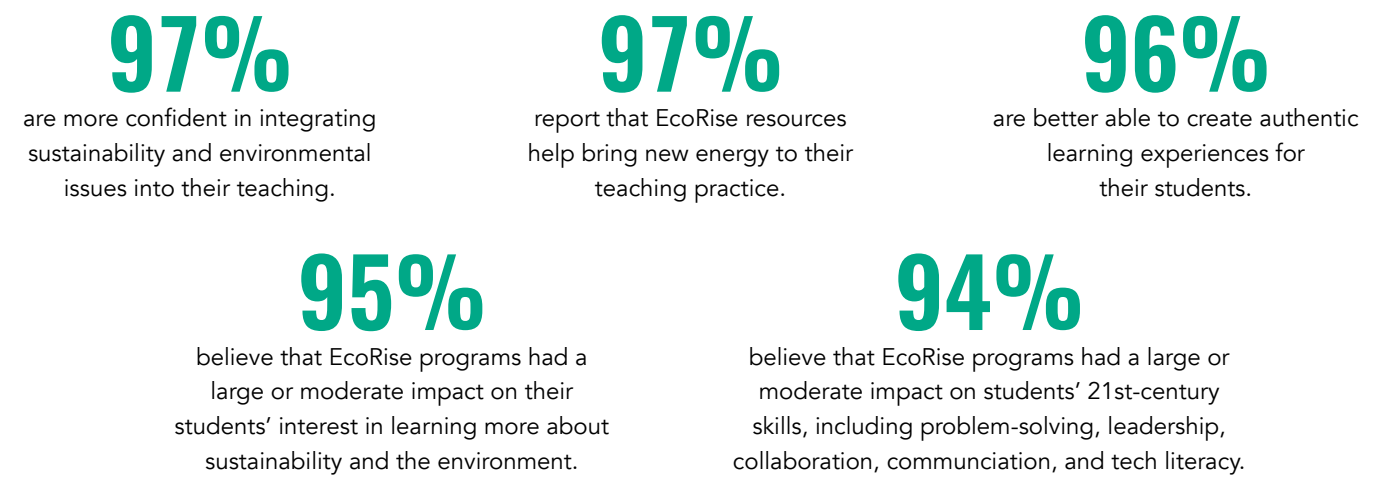
SINCE 2015, WE'VE SERVED:



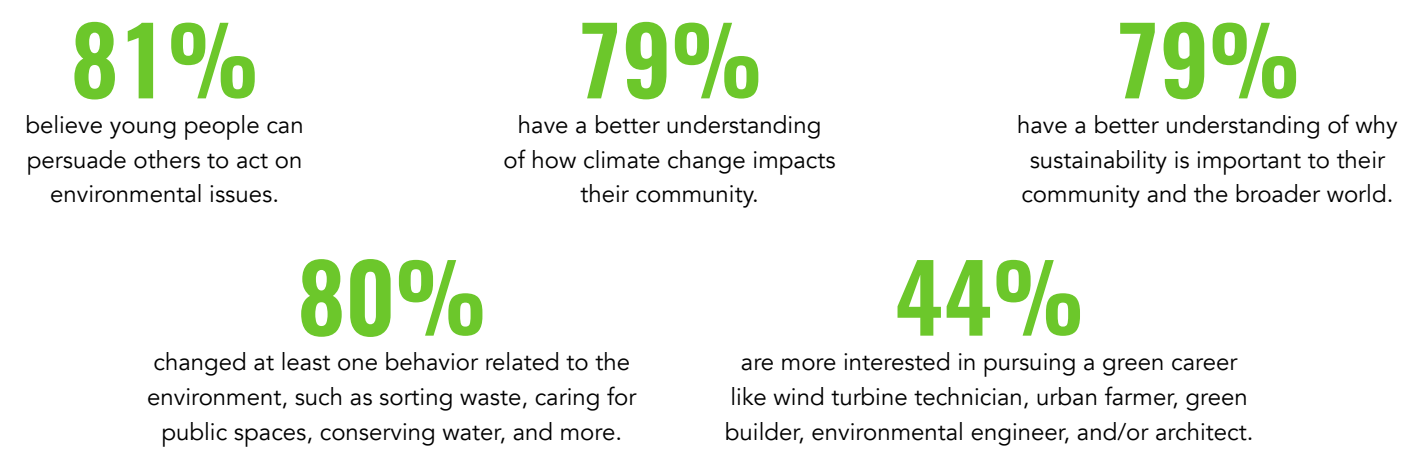
EcoRise in K-12 Schools

Educators who are prepared to integrate the topics of sustainability, environmental justice, and design thinking into their classrooms are essential to solving the climate crisis. EcoRise is dedicated to providing resources, leading-edge professional development, and support to educators who want to incorporate climate resilience and equitable practices into their classrooms. Our train-the-teacher model and online platform provide K-12 curriculum, professional development, and community resources to educators around the world.

EDUCATOR OUTCOMES



STUDENT OUTCOMES



"EcoRise has been an invaluable tool in my classroom. The comprehensive platform supports sustainable projects and fosters environmental stewardship among students. With its wealth of resources and ongoing assistance, EcoRise has played a significant role in cultivating a culture of sustainability in our school."

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, COCONUT GROVE, FLORIDA

Growing Eco-Literacy Across the U.S.

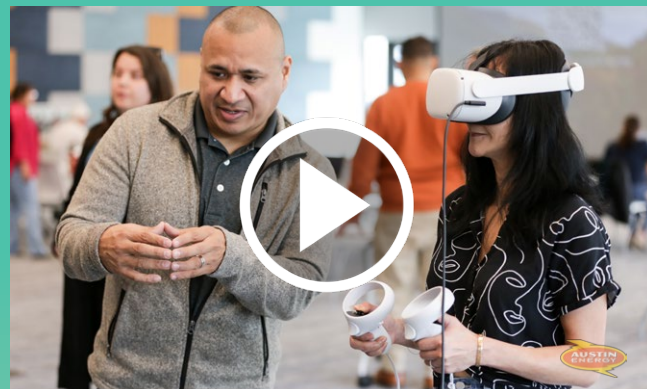


ACTIVATING TEACHERS AS LEADERS

EcoRise teachers who emerge as leaders in their communities have the opportunity to become EcoRise Teacher Ambassadors. Ambassadors are champions of environmental education and climate justice who implement EcoRise resources in their classrooms, empowering other teachers to do the same. Ambassadors serve as a bridge between EcoRise and the communities we serve.

UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Our leading-edge professional development opportunities prepare educators for the changing educational landscape and enable them to make sustainability and climate education applicable to students' everyday lives. We work with school districts and community partners to provide educators with real-world context, resources, and tools that localize climate education and connect students to real issues they can impact in their own communities. This year, online, in-person, and at national conferences across the U.S., we provided 131 workshops that promoted a range of topics such as using data to achieve climate justice, teaching sustainability through project-based learning (PBL), and supporting youth through climate anxiety.



LEADING-EDGE CURRICULA & IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

EcoRise exposes educators and students to technology that is continually evolving to mitigate the issues posed by climate change. This year, we partnered with Austin Energy to grow the [Electric Vehicles for Schools program](#), publishing new lessons that introduce middle and high school students to sustainable transportation options, their social and environmental impacts, and their intersection with environmental justice. We launched the new lessons with an immersive workshop where Central Texas teachers explored the intersection of electric mobility and equity and demoed activities to build students' understanding of these topics. Learn more about our partnership in the video above. The new Sustainable Transportation lessons are available for educators everywhere as a part of our [Sustainable Intelligence curriculum](#).

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: PREPARING LEADERS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Hands-on learning is key to preparing youth for life after high school. Using EcoRise curricula and Eco-Audit Grants as project-based learning units, Teacher Ambassador Jennifer Humphrey's students have transformed Nimitz Middle School from an "inner-city school" to one with outdoor learning spaces and gardens that provide exciting new problems to be solved by students each year. Learn how students implemented real-world solutions in the video below.



ADVOCATING FOR CLIMATE EDUCATION POLICY IN NEW YORK

EcoRise joined [CRETE](#), an intergenerational group including public school students, in drafting and lobbying for a comprehensive climate education bill for New York State this school year, known as [S.278A/A.1559A](#). We were proud to participate in lobby days in Albany, NY, where we educated legislators on the current gaps in climate education and possibilities to promote experiential learning and green careers. As a result, the bill gained 42 Assembly co-sponsors and 19 Senate co-sponsors—more than any other climate education bill before it.



USING TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE SOCIAL CHANGE

The [Games for Change \(G4C\) Student Challenge](#) showcases the ingenuity of students who leverage technology to engage people in social change. EcoRise was a thematic partner for the G4C annual student social impact game design competition. This year's challenge incorporated the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to engage students and educators with new ways to explore complex problems affecting their communities and develop creative solutions. Our theme, "Stronger and Greener Communities," provided educators with curricula and inspired middle and high school students to address climate resilience topics in their game designs. The Stronger and Greener Communities category winners were Alina and Miya from New York City with their game, [EcoCity Tales](#), and Scarlett from Los Angeles with their game, [Green City](#). Play the winning games below or explore all game submission in our Theme Arcade.



Find Events in Your Region

Explore Our Theme Arcade

Preparing Students for the Green Workforce

As the demand for green jobs grows, embedding sustainability and green career preparation into education is crucial to ensure students are prepared to lead, design, and work towards a climate-resilient future. EcoRise supports educators who want to prepare their students with future-focused curricula, professional development opportunities, and one-on-one support to help students prepare for the changing future. In addition to classroom instruction, their students receive access to certification opportunities and field experiences with EcoRise partner organizations that unlock and ignite interest in green careers.

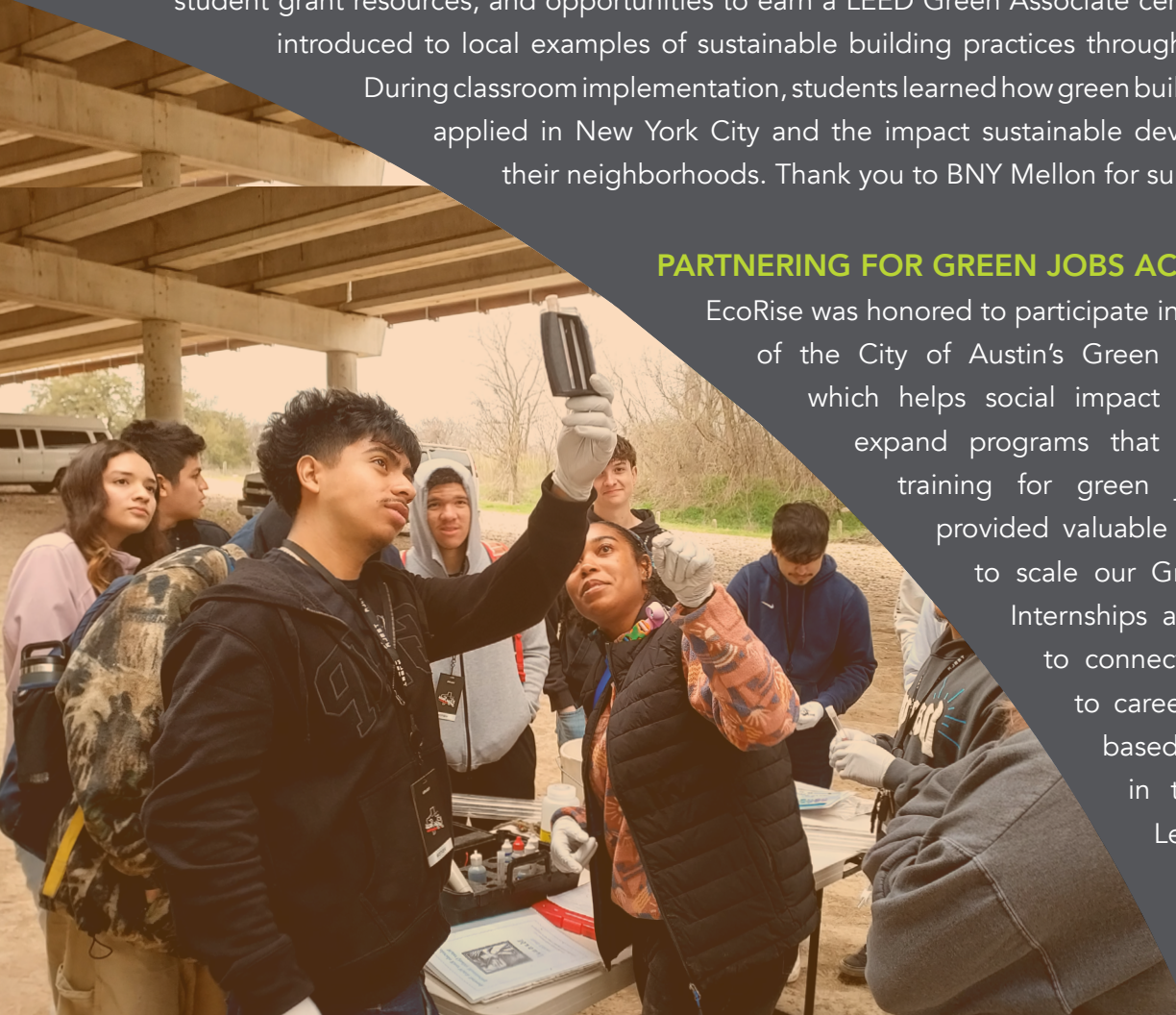
GREEN BUILDING DESIGN IN NYC

Preparing students to participate in the emerging green economy starts with leading-edge professional development that inspires students to connect their passions to their pathways after high school. The Green Building Academy was born in 2019, and this school year, we piloted our first green building educator cohort in New York City. The NYC Sustainability and Green Design Program provided an interactive community of learning to ten educators. Over the course of the program, the cohort received access to online learning modules; EcoRise's Green Building Lessons, Sustainable Intelligence, and Design Studio curricula; student grant resources; and opportunities to earn a LEED Green Associate certificate. Educators were introduced to local examples of sustainable building practices throughout the five boroughs.

During classroom implementation, students learned how green building concepts are being applied in New York City and the impact sustainable development is having on their neighborhoods. Thank you to BNY Mellon for supporting this cohort.

PARTNERING FOR GREEN JOBS ACROSS THE U.S.

EcoRise was honored to participate in the most recent cohort of the City of Austin's Green Workforce Accelerator, which helps social impact organizations build or expand programs that create green jobs or training for green jobs. This experience provided valuable insights and strategies to scale our Green Careers Academy Internships and prepare companies to connect high school students to career education and work-based learning opportunities in the sustainable sector. Learn more about the Accelerator [here](#).



TACKLING A CHANGING CLIMATE IN LOUISIANA

Over the past two years, the Building a Healthy and Resilient Louisiana Program has brought together 15 middle and high school teachers who are passionate about inspiring students through green building, design, and career exploration. This year, teachers met in person and virtually to learn from EcoRise and collaborate with one another. Their goal was to inspire students to innovate new solutions to social issues in Louisiana, such as increasingly powerful hurricanes and impacts of industrial pollution from oil refineries. Students explored green career pathways and got inspired to study stormwater mitigation, water quality issues, green building and urban design, and ways to take climate action in their communities. Thank you to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Gulf of Mexico for championing this program.

"EcoRise materials are a great supplement and complement to any curriculum. The resources help you to bring the real-world into your classroom. Students are able to engage in real-world problem solving and hone in on their 21st century skills."

CECELIA GILLAM, HAHNVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, HAHNVILLE, LA

BUILDING EQUITABLE PATHWAYS IN TEXAS

EcoRise's Building a Green Texas program was a groundbreaking research partnership funded by an Environmental Literacy Resilience Grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. EcoRise and the University of Texas at Austin's School of Architecture designed this program to foster a green building school-to-job pipeline across Texas that contributes to a more diverse workforce and helps underserved youth develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to tackle challenges posed by climate change.

This school year, eight Central Texas high school teachers participated in the program, receiving training and stipends to teach EcoRise's Green Building Lessons for a Sustainable Future and provide feedback on the curriculum and student experience. Students conducted energy audits, calculating kilowatt hours used and carbon produced; analyzed human behavior in a school garden and built pathways to accommodate foot traffic; and studied social entrepreneurship, upcycling, the cradle-to-cradle model, and green design. In the field, students explored green careers through hands-on experiences hosted by EcoRise partners.



Students visited the University of Texas at Austin for a Hot Science, Cool Talks event where they learned about food production, renewable agriculture, environmental justice, and food security from Dr. Raj Patel.



Students learned about electric vehicle technology and AI manufacturing at the Tesla Gigafactory and joined Austin Youth River Watch to collect water quality data and learn how they improve community health and well-being.

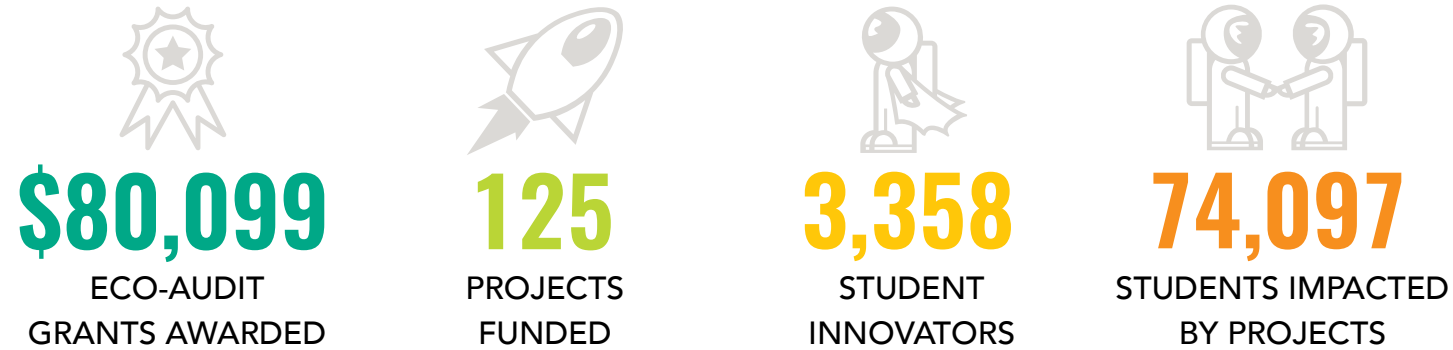


Students learned about Austin Energy's LEED-certified headquarters, electric mobility, equity considerations for large-scale implementation, and green career opportunities.

Bringing Student Innovation To Life

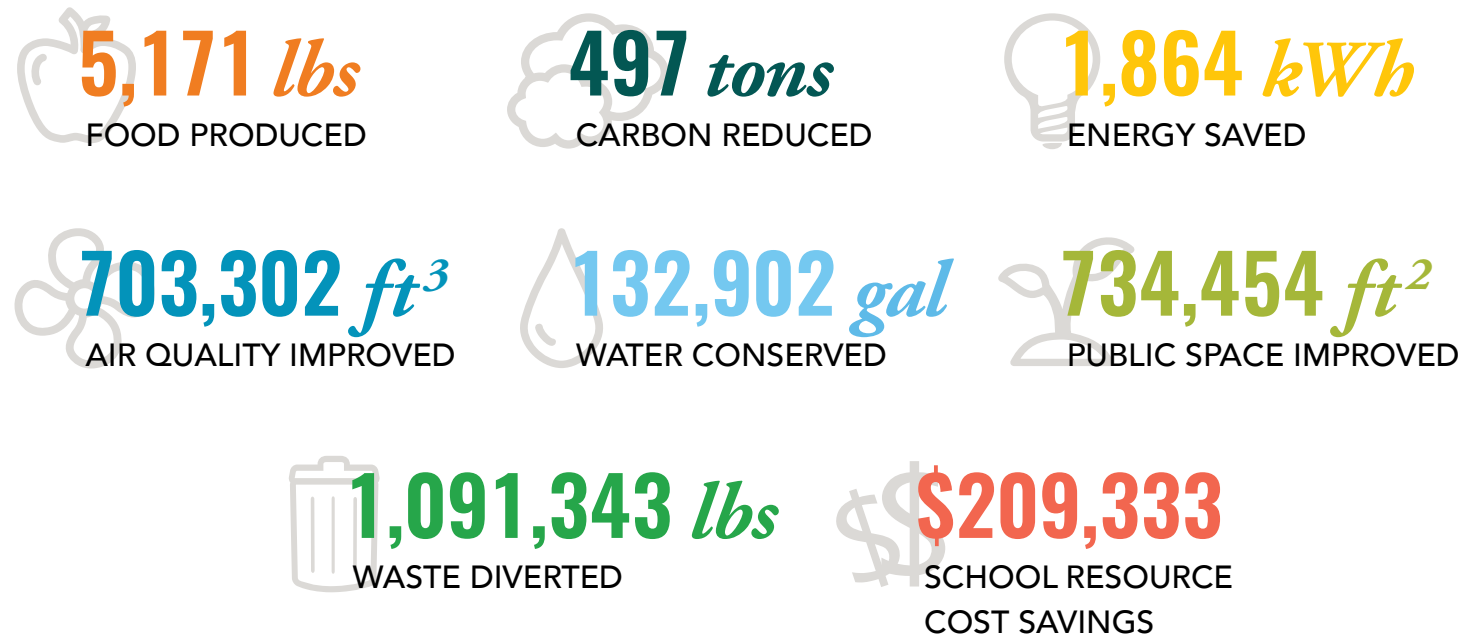
Eco-Audits guide students in gathering data about a sustainability challenge in their school community and designing solutions that embody the triple bottom line: people, planet, and prosperity.

THIS YEAR:



Grant awardees have real impacts on their communities! Every student group that is funded demonstrates the social, economic, and environmental significance of its sustainability projects.

Check out what this year's student projects will accomplish within the first 12 months:



"With the support we received, we implemented several sustainability projects, including a hydroponic [garden] using recyclables. These initiatives have not only enhanced our students' learning experiences but also made a positive impact on our community. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to turn our ideas into reality."

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, BRONX, NY



Student Showcases

This year's Student Innovation Showcase season was record-breaking! Our annual regional showcases provide a platform for young problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and environmental stewards to show off the impact of their Eco-Audit Grant projects. Sixty-three student teams showcased at five in-person and five virtual events nationwide. We were blown away by 10 teams at our first annual South Texas showcase and had Mayor Ron Nirenberg in attendance at the 6th Annual San Antonio Showcase. We celebrated the largest number of student presenters in showcase history and the debut of the first two environmental justice-focused Eco-Audit Grants at the 5th Annual Washington, DC, showcase. Additionally, 13 teams from the Austin Youth Climate Equity Council and the San Antonio Mayor's Youth Engagement Council for Climate Initiatives joined their regional showcases to present their work with community organizations this school year (learn more on page 22). Community members left each event with new environmental knowledge and in awe of the impact students aged 5 to 19 have been creating in their communities.

[Relive the Magic in Our Recap Blogcap Blog](#)

We've been funding student projects across the U.S. for nearly 10 years!

Since 2015, the Student Innovation Fund has:



Student Innovation in Action

SHRINKING FOOD DESERTS IN MIAMI, FL

During an EcoRise lesson, many of Teacher Ambassador Laura Berenguer's students learned that they live in a food desert without easy access to healthy, fresh foods. They took action by researching and designing an edible garden that would provide more than 75 pounds of food to Robert Renick Educational Center students and families every year. They brought their garden to life with Eco-Audit Grants, applying for and receiving \$4,124 over the last three years. This school year, Laura's students used their grant to add wheelchair-accessible seating, improve soil health, and plant pollinator plants and new foods like watermelons and collard greens. Read more about their experience [here](#).



MAKING SPACE FOR POLLINATORS IN NYC

Through a Public Space Eco-Audit, JoEllen Schuleman's students were surprised there was so much green space in their neighborhood but so little for people and pollinators to enjoy on the grounds of PS 199 Jesse Isidor Straus Elementary. They used two Eco-Audit Grants, totaling \$1,010, to create a native pollinator garden and install a fence around the space to ensure students can safely observe nature and protect the garden's longevity.



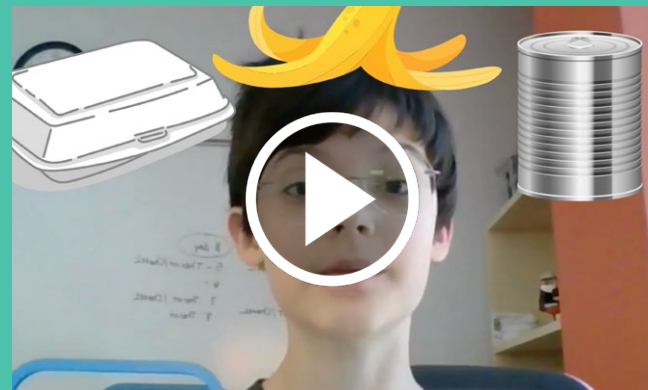
BRINGING BIRDS BACK TO RINCON, GA

"If you build it, they will come" is the motto leading John Cassell's students, who noticed a lack of birds on Effingham College and Career Academy's school grounds. They learned that birds play important roles in the ecosystem, such as pollination, pest control, and seed dispersal. This team used a \$750 Eco-Audit Grant to construct birdboxes along a nature path on campus, offering opportunities for students to engage with and learn from nature.



UPCYCLING ART IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Keli Baker's students at Dolores Huerta Elementary designed a new life for dried-up markers after learning that most "marker recycling programs" burn instead of recycle markers. They used a \$750 Eco-Audit Grant to collaborate with local artist Adrianna Alejo Sorondo and create an art piece with 1,500 upcycled markers that comments on plastic waste. To ensure longer-term results, they also created an Eco-Teacher Pledge to inspire their teachers to use plastic-free art supplies, such as crayons and colored pencils. See their application video above.



WASTE-SORTING AI IN AUSTIN, TX

Teacher Ambassador Stacey Smith's sixth graders conducted a Waste Eco-Audit and learned that some members of the General Marshall Middle School community were unsure of how to properly sort their waste. Their solution was to use a \$750 Eco-Audit Grant to create educational signage and teach everyone how to sort their waste at lunchtime. To streamline this process, one teammate, Cyril, created a machine learning program that can identify objects as recycling, compost, or waste. Learn more about this team's work in [this story](#) from KUTX.



ORGANIZING FOR EJ IN WASHINGTON, DC

After learning about environmental justice (EJ), Philisha Adkins-Lewis's high schoolers at Friendship Public Charter School felt the call to organize and educate their school about local EJ issues, which affect everything from student health to community access to resources. They started the Global Advocates group and spearheaded an educational campaign, creating informational posters, going on morning announcements, and writing columns in school newsletters. They were awarded EcoRise's first EJ-focused Eco-Audit Grant and will use the \$1,037 to continue campaigning and spreading awareness.

Explore More Student Projects From This Year



EcoRise in the Community

Youth are navigating a future shaped by rapid change and uncertainty. EcoRise provides opportunities for a diverse network of student leaders to learn skills that prepare them to tackle the issues they'll face, influence environmental policy, cultivate climate resilience, and participate in the new green economy. With community partners, we are proud to facilitate youth councils focused on civic engagement and centered in climate resiliency, equity, and action and to offer paid internships designed to create equitable pathways to green careers for youth from communities that are historically underrepresented in sustainability fields.

COMMUNITY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- Biodiversity & Conservation
- Climate Resilience • Community Health
- Equitable Food Access • Renewable Energy & Climate Technology • Urban Green Spaces

THIS YEAR



66

YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS



44

PAID INTERNS, SPRING & SUMMER



13

GREEN PROFESSIONAL MENTOR ORGS



42

FIELD EVENTS

SINCE 2020

218

YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS

95

PAID INTERNS, SPRING & SUMMER

25

GREEN PROFESSIONAL MENTOR ORGS

183

FIELD EVENTS

YOUTH CLIMATE COUNCIL MEMBER OUTCOMES

100%

have a better understanding of the importance of sustainability to their community and the broader world.

100%

experienced personal and professional growth during their time on the Council.

92%

are more likely to act as a leader on environmental issues in their school or community.

94%

are more aware of educational, vocational training, and college opportunities that can lead to green jobs or careers.

94%

better consider scientific uncertainty, cultural knowledge, and diverse community values when making a decision.

INTERNSHIP PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

100%

are more aware of green career pathways and/or job opportunities in their community.

100%

feel better prepared to enter the workforce.

100%

are more likely to act as a leader on environmental issues in their community.

100%

feel more confident in workplace settings.

91%

are more interested in pursuing a green career.

"I have gained a growing network of climate professionals that I frequently reach out to for guidance/advice. I've also gained valuable skills in public speaking and built valuable connections with other passionate students."

23-24 AUSTIN YOUTH CLIMATE EQUITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Youth Climate Councils

As the impacts of climate change become more apparent and widespread, the need to support youth with knowledge, skills, and resources to grow into intersectional environmental leaders is more critical than ever. EcoRise’s Youth Climate Councils activate the next generation to engage in community issues related to climate change, environmental policy, and environmental justice. Council members selected in Austin and San Antonio learned how these concepts relate to improving their communities’ health and well-being, learned diverse approaches to climate resilience, worked alongside community organizations, and engaged in climate action using their city’s climate plan as a guide. Each Council’s activities culminated in a presentation of its work at its regional Student Innovation Showcases (see page 17 for more).



AUSTIN

In partnership with the City of Austin Office of Sustainability, EcoRise facilitated the third Austin Youth Climate Equity Council cohort this school year, supporting 30 high schoolers from across Central Texas to harness their passions and deeply engage in the climate resilience work happening in this region. Council members learned from, built organizational capacity for, and amplified the voices of frontline organizations working on critical community issues in Austin, including Diversity Awareness and Wellness in Action (DAWA); Festival Beach Food Forest; Pecan Street, Inc.; People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER); and The Village Place.

Meet the Austin Youth Climate Council

SAN ANTONIO

The fourth cohort of the San Antonio Mayor’s Youth Engagement Council for Climate Initiatives included 31 high schoolers from across the San Antonio metro area. In partnership with the City of San Antonio Office of Sustainability and the Hollomon Price Foundation, this year’s council reached new students, supported returning Council members in stepping up as leaders, and deepened its engagement with local community organizations. Council members lead community initiatives, including holding workshops promoting community health, hosting food drives, creating pollinator gardens, and teaching people to create seed balls to promote biodiversity.

Meet the San Antonio Youth Climate Council

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council members learned from city officials, local organizations, and environmental justice leaders about local sustainability, climate issues, and the climate resilience work already happening in Austin and San Antonio. The Austin Council re-mulched a portion of the free Festival Beach Food Forest on It’s My Park Day and joined the Cesar Chavez March with PODER. The San Antonio Council explored and supported sustainable food systems with the Pearl Farmers Market and the San Antonio Food Bank.



SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Council members reflected that speaking to adults and community members helped them grow personally and professionally. They all shared how their work created local impact at the Central Texas and San Antonio Student Innovation Showcases. At the University of Texas Energy Week closing keynote, six Austin Council members had the opportunity to share how academic researchers, industry, and youth can work toward a more equitable energy paradigm. Austin Council member Maraym was invited to speak about the role of youth in climate action at the closing panel of the Planet Texas 2050 Symposium. San Antonio council members Najia and Saanvi lead a panel for EcoRise Teacher Ambassadors discussing how they could support youth to achieve climate justice and systemic change.



COUNCIL MEMBERS IN THE MEDIA



The weight of stopping the climate crisis has real mental health implications on the majority of young people. In the video above, Council members share how the next generation is grappling with and combating climate anxiety.



Council member Caroleena established the EcoScholars Committee at Judson Early College Academy in San Antonio to systematize a student-run recycling program for the school. Get a behind-the-scenes look at the program in the video above; learn more about her work in this [blog](#).

Green Careers Academy Internship Program

Bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience in environmental justice and climate resilience, EcoRise’s internships provide high school students with immersive, paid opportunities that equip them with knowledge, skills, confidence, and community connections. We partner with frontline and community-based organizations to give students localized, hands-on, work-based learning experiences.



SOWING FOOD JUSTICE

This spring, Galveston’s Own Farmers Market (GOFM) hosted the fourth iteration of our joint internship program, Students for Eco-Empowerment & Diversity (SEED). Ten Galveston high school students explored careers in urban agriculture, food justice, and community health through a range of experiences. Interns learned from local farmers and then designed and planted vegetable gardens. Through GOFM’s Young Gardeners Program, they mentored elementary students and helped maintain school gardens. They also honed event management, customer service, and promotional skills at GOFM’s weekly farmers market.

AUDITING OUTDOOR LEARNING

Elijah and Rahila worked with Cities Connecting Children with Nature - Austin to undertake a comprehensive audit of existing outdoor resources at Austin ISD schools this summer. They identified opportunities for schools to more equitably utilize or create outdoor learning spaces, which promote student well-being and their ability to learn and thrive.



ENGAGING COMMUNITY

This summer, at San Antonio College, Lorenzo, Najia, and Saanvi worked with the William R. Sinkin Eco Centro to conduct a recycling audit, identify improvements, and educate faculty and students on how to participate in the campus recycling program. They also supported community outreach to spread awareness about Eco Centro’s sustainability events.



SUPPORTING FOOD SYSTEMS

As interns at the San Antonio Food Bank this summer, Kirat, Olivia, and Saadhana explored the multifaceted nature of food insecurity. They supported producing (planting, growing, and harvesting produce), packaging, and distributing food and connecting food insecure community members to services and education.

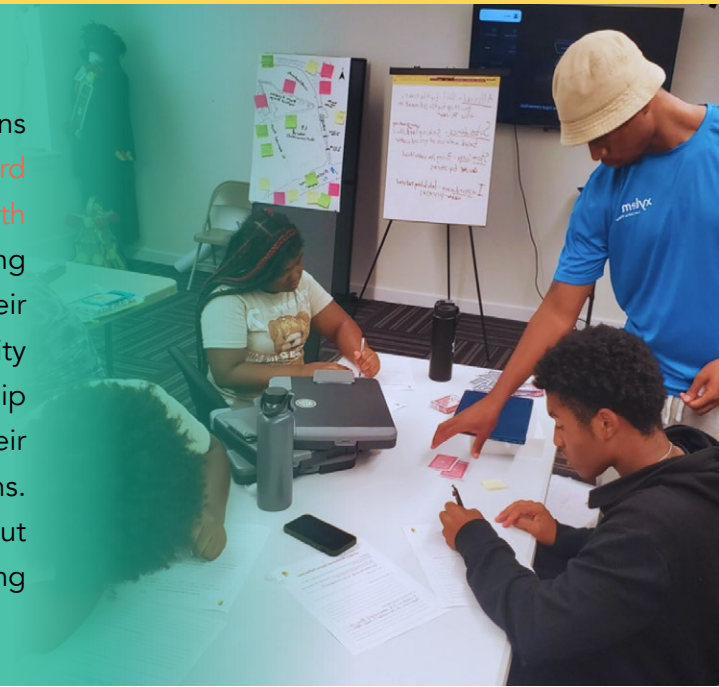


PREVENTING PLASTIC POLLUTION

Every piece of plastic that ever entered our oceans is still there. Annika, Caroline, Kaylyn, and Safira supported Into the Sea this summer, collecting and analyzing data to pinpoint the sources and hotspots of plastic pollution in Austin and supporting the launch a “Bring Your Own” reusable container initiative for local restaurants.

SCALING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

We’re excited to share a new collaboration in New Orleans between EcoRise and two frontline organizations: Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Education and Development and Youth Rebuilding New Orleans. These partners facilitate programming that educates and inspires youth to be guardians of their communities through environmental justice and sustainability initiatives. EcoRise provided internship stipends and mentorship coaching to each organization, with the goal of increasing their capacity and the efficacy and impact of their internship programs. We learned valuable lessons from these organizations about how to collaborate with and support more groups in building internship programs of their own.



“I better understand the value of community and mobilizing people starting from the grassroots; I feel more motivated and excited for what my life has to offer me.”

2024 GREEN CAREERS ACADEMY SUMMER INTERN

We’re grateful to the volunteer mentors who inspire these young leaders to take their first steps toward careers that will shape a more just and sustainable future. These hands-on career opportunities were supported by our wonderful partners, the Hollomon Price Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Gulf of Mexico Division.

Advancing Systems Change

Gen:Thrive is a collaborative initiative that provides shared data and technology tools to accelerate sustainability education and advance health, equity, and climate resilience in K–12 schools. Joining forces with state partners, Gen:Thrive builds our field’s capacity to share information, explore local community needs, identify partnership opportunities, and amplify resources that are focused on environmental literacy, climate justice, healthy school buildings, outdoor learning, and green workforce development. In 2019, EcoRise launched Gen:Thrive as a pilot project in Texas with the vision of building tools that could expand to support communities in all 50 states by 2025. Today, we have 47 interactive [dashboards and directories](#), and [climate equity maps](#), which partners use to:

📖 Understand the Movement

Map environmental literacy programs and correlate to data indicators for equity and climate vulnerability.

🔗 Build Strategic Alliances

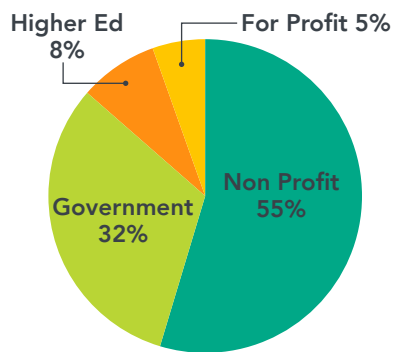
Connect K–12 program providers and identify opportunities to partner and accelerate collective impact.

📊 Increase Support

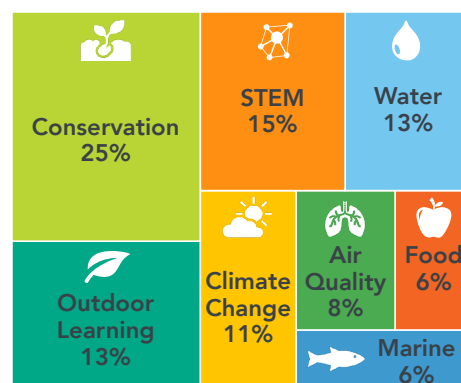
Use data visualization to create value propositions, expand audiences, and drive resources to the movement.

INSIGHTS FOUND

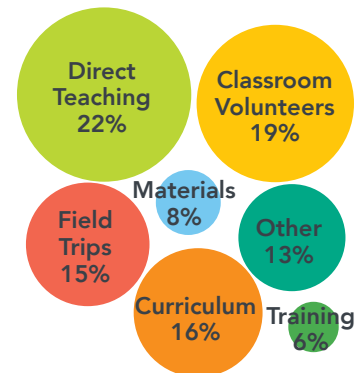
ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE



ECO-THEMES TAUGHT



SERVICES OFFERED



[Explore Gen:Thrive Tools](#)

“We participate in Gen:Thrive because we’ve never had a comprehensive look at who’s providing environmental education in our state. It’s challenging for service providers to connect with schools, so we use Gen:Thrive and this data to facilitate those relationships.”

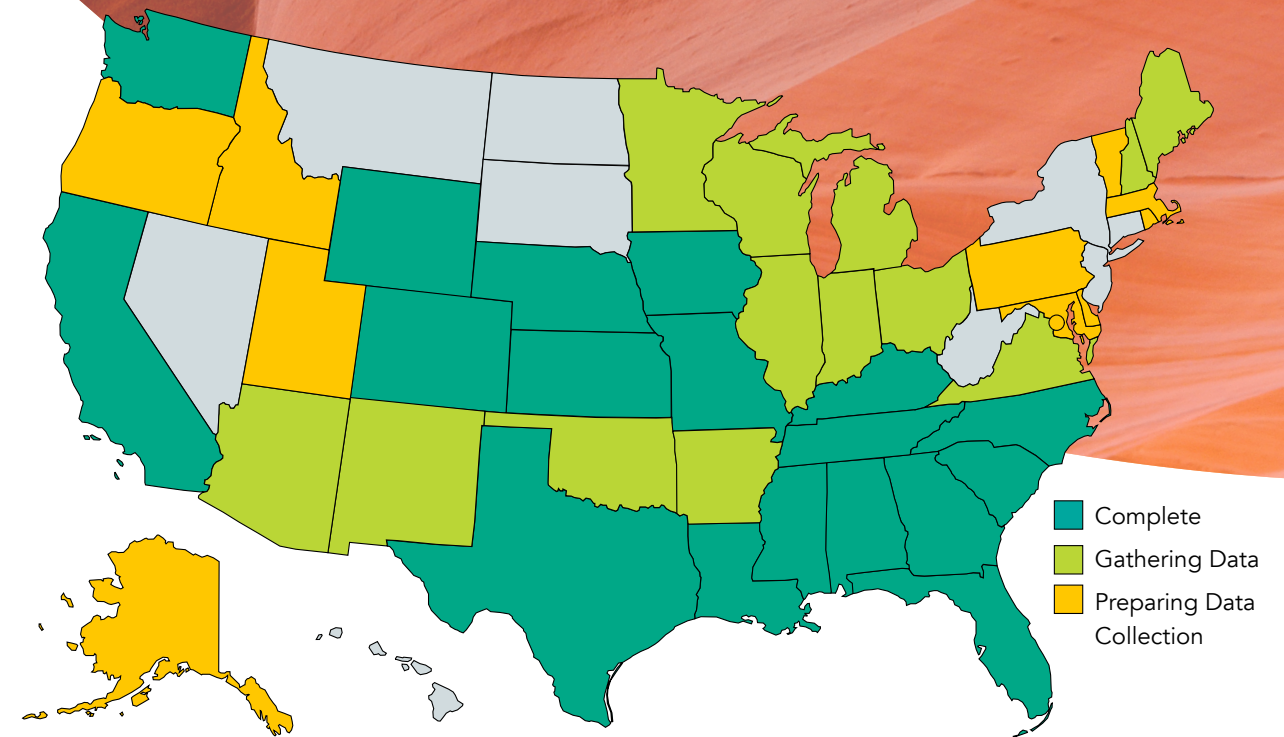
SUSAN MCGUIRE, WYOMING ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

TOGETHER, WE’VE MAPPED:

42
STATES

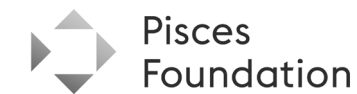
1,683
SERVICE PROVIDERS

2,277
PROGRAMS



Complete
Gathering Data
Preparing Data Collection

GEN:THRIVE PARTNERS



Alaska Natural Resource and Outdoor Education Association
Association for Environmental and Outdoor Learning
Austin Independent School District AT&T
The Center for Green Schools
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (EE)
EE Alliance of Georgia
EE Association of Illinois
EE Association of Indiana
EE Association of Alabama
EE Association of South Carolina
Environmental Educators of North Carolina Fortafy

Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Gray Family Foundation
Green Ribbon Schools
Iowa Conservation Education Coalition
Kansas Association of Conservation Districts
Kentucky Association for EE
League of Environmental Educators in Florida
Louisiana Department of Education
Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education
Minnesota Association for EE
Minnesota Children & Nature Connection
Mississippi EE Alliance
Missouri EE Association

Missouri Green Schools
New Hampshire Environmental Educators
Oklahoma Association for EE
Oklahoma Green Schools
Project Learning Tree
Southeastern EE Alliance
Tennessee EE Association
Texas Association for EE
Texas Children in Nature Network
Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wilderness Inquiry
Wisconsin Association for EE
Wyoming Alliance for EE

Partnering for Impact

The impact and scope of our work at EcoRise are significantly amplified by the support of public and private sector partners who invest in our programs and support EcoRise schools through sponsorships, in-kind donations, volunteerism, and financial contributions. We are grateful to work with this coalition of visionary people and organizations committed to preparing a new generation of climate and sustainability leaders.

SPOTLIGHT PARTNERS



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

- | | |
|---|--|
| American Family Institute for Corporate and Social Impact | ERB |
| Austin Energy | Institute of Real Estate Management |
| Cadman Cares | JDC Trust |
| Constellation | PepsiCo Recycling - Recycle Rally |
| City of Austin Office of Innovation | Perkins Eastman DC |
| City of San Antonio | Texas Alternatives Conference |
| Climate First Bank | Love, Tito's |
| Constellation Energy | University of California, LA School of Education & Information Studies |

PROGRAM COLLABORATORS

- | | |
|---|--|
| Arizona State University | Frontline Catalysts |
| Breakthrough Central Texas | Galveston's Own Farmers Market |
| Cities Connecting Children to Nature | Games for Change |
| Climate Generation | Into the Sea |
| Diversity Awareness and Wellness in Action (DAWA) | Math for America |
| Education Service Center, Region 01 | Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) |
| Education Service Center, Region 13 | Pecan Street, Inc. |
| Education Service Center, Region 20 | |

SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS

- Austin Independent School District
- DC Public Schools
- Mesquite Independent School District
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- New York City Department of Education
- Palm Beach County Schools
- Sacramento City Unified School District

- People Organized in Defense of Earth and Her Resources (PODER)
- Project Wet
- San Antonio Food Bank
- San Antonio River Foundation
- University of Texas at Austin
- The Village Place
- William R. Sinkin Eco Centro



SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

This year, we partnered with Southwest Airlines to grow the Repurpose with Purpose Goes to School program in Atlanta and Central Texas. In both regions, teachers attended hands-on leatherworking workshops, taught lessons in sustainability and entrepreneurship, and supported students in the creation of upcycled leather projects. Central Texas students submitted their creations to be displayed at the Austin Bergstrom International Airport and joined us for a behind-the-scenes tour of the airport. Learn more in the video on the left.

"The UCLA School of Education & Information Studies is proud of our growing relationship with EcoRise, recognizing the essential role that institutions of higher education play in supporting K-12 outreach. This collaboration strengthens our commitment to empowering the next generation with the skills and knowledge necessary to address environmental challenges through a social justice lens."

SARAH BANG, UCLA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & INFORMATION STUDIES



FRONTLINE CATALYSTS

We were honored to collaborate with the grassroots organization **Frontline Catalyst** in Oakland, CA, to engage students and educators in local climate justice efforts this year. During our joint teacher workshops, we explored carbon's impact on marginalized communities, climate data maps to track local environmental justice issues, and EcoRise lessons that engage students in these important topics. Community partnerships like this one help bring EcoRise resources to localized teacher cohorts across the country.



WATER FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR

The Water Footprint Calculator is a free tool that illustrates how everyday actions—from washing dishes to buying groceries—impact water use. The calculator pairs with our Lessons for Understanding Our Water Footprint curriculum to help students understand how choices directly and indirectly impact water consumption. EcoRise is excited to have acquired the calculator from its creators, Grace Communications Foundation, this year. Check out the Water Footprint Calculator, available in both English and Spanish, [here](#).



Join Our Movement

Thanks to your support, EcoRise has grown its programs and prepared thousands of students to thrive in our changing world by connecting them to the tools they need to act on climate. Together, we are cultivating the next generation of resilient youth who are passionate about creating a more just and sustainable world for all!

How you can get involved:

- **Spread** the word about EcoRise
- **Connect** us to new schools
- **Fuel** our work with a donation
- **Introduce** us to new community partners





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@ECORISE • #WERISE