



# Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State

## Minnesota Public Benefit Corporation / Annual Benefit Report

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 304A



Read the instructions before completing this form

Must be filed by March 31

Filing Fee: \$55 for expedited service in-person, \$35 if submitted by mail

The Annual Benefit Report covers the 12 month period ending on December 31 of the previous year.

Notice: Failure to file this form by March 31 of this year will result in the revocation of the corporation's public benefit status without further notice from the Secretary of State, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 304A.301

1. File Number 5M-979

2. Corporate Name: (Required) Nova Group, GBC

3. The public benefit corporation's board of directors has reviewed and approved this report.

4. In the field below, enter the information required by section 304A.301 subd. 2 or 3 for the period covered by this report, (see instructions for further information): Note: Use additional sheets if needed. (Required)

See attached exhibits

5. I, the undersigned, certify that I am the chief executive officer of this public benefit corporation. I further certify that I have signed this document no more than 30 days before the document is delivered to the secretary of state for filing, and that this document is current when signed. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

[Signature]  
Signature of Public Benefit Corporation's Chief Executive Officer

3/29/24  
Date (Must be dated within 30 days before the report is delivered to the Secretary of State for Filing)

### Email Address for Official Notices

Enter an email address to which the Secretary of State can forward official notices required by law and other notices:

ben.bohline@novagroupgbc.com

Check here to have your email address excluded from requests for bulk data, to the extent allowed by Minnesota law.

### List a name and daytime phone number of a person who can be contacted about this form:

Ben Bohline 952.270.0566  
Contact Name Phone Number

Entities that own, lease, or have any financial interest in agricultural land or land capable of being farmed must register with the MN Dept. of Agriculture's Corporate Farm Program.

Does this entity own, lease, or have any financial interest in agricultural land or land capable of being farmed?

Yes  No



March 29, 2024

## Exhibit

### Nova Group GBC – Annual Benefit Report

Nova Group GBC submits this Annual Report pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 304A.301.

Nova Group GBC's Board of Directors has certified the choice of B Lab as its third-party standard. B Lab is an independent globally recognized third-party certifier of B Corporations and its Board of Directors has approved the report.

As of February 2023, in accordance with the B Impact Assessment produced by B Labs, Nova achieved a score of 90.4, surpassing the certification mark of 80, and is now officially a "Certified B Corp". Certificate attached.

Nova Group GBC is an environmental consulting business. Most of our work is done to identify and remediate environmental risks and issues. With regard to this reporting period and period covered by the report, Nova Group, GBC identifies B Lab as the third-party standard determined by the board. With reference to the B Lab standard, Nova Group GBC identifies the following ways in which it has pursued the general public benefit:

1. Considering the social and environmental impact of its decision making;
2. General commitment to social or environmental responsibility (e.g. to conserve the environment);
3. A commitment to a specific positive social impact (e.g. poverty alleviation, sustainable economic development);
4. A commitment to a specific positive environmental impact (e.g. reducing waste sent to landfills through upcycled products);
5. A commitment to serve a target beneficiary group in need;
6. Employee training that includes social or environmental issues material to our company or its mission;
7. Manager roles with job descriptions that explicitly incorporate social and environmental performance;
8. Performance reviews consider social and environmental issues;
9. Executive team members required commitment to social and environmental performance;
10. Board of Directors review of social and environmental performance;
11. We measure our externalities in monetary terms and incorporate them into our financial balances;

an equal opportunity employer

12. Prohibition of bribes in any form, including kickbacks or gifts, on any portion of contract payments or soft dollar practices;
13. Formal oversight policy covering direct or indirect political contributions, charitable donations, and sponsorships;
14. Public disclosure of financial and in-kind contributions to political parties, politicians, lobby groups, charitable organizations, and advocacy groups;
15. Written employee whistle-blowing policy with confidentiality policy;
16. Circulation of whistle-blowing policy to all employees and business partners;
17. Communication of the anti-corruption system to the relevant internal and external stakeholders;
18. Training on the anti-corruption system;
19. Providing supporting tools and guidance (e.g. self-assessment survey for high-risk departments);
20. Provide the opportunity for anonymous mechanisms to report concerns and grievances;
21. IT systems have different password protection systems that are changed periodically with different access levels according to the position of the staff member accessing the data;
22. Fraud risk assessment is conducted at least annually, with any identified internal control deficiencies communicated to Board of Directors and senior management;
23. Lines of financial reporting, responsibilities, and limits for the authorization, approval, and verification of disbursements are all documented in writing;
24. Financial control activities are documented, and at a minimum, cover controls around cash disbursement, accounts receivable, accounts payable, and inventory management;
25. Employee wages that adjust to inflation and bonus and profit-sharing plan;
26. Partial match of employee retirement;
27. Direct deposit for wages;
28. Insurance benefits;
29. We have a formal onboarding process for new employees;
30. We offered ongoing training on core job responsibilities to employees within the last year;
31. We have a policy to encourage internal promotions and hiring for advanced positions (e.g. posting job openings internally first);
32. We provide cross-skills training for career advancements or transitions (e.g. management training for non-managers);
33. We facilitate or have an allocated budget for external professional development opportunities, (e.g. conference attendance, online trainings);
34. We provide reimbursements or programs for intensive continuing education credentials (e.g. college degrees, professional licensures);
35. Following a non-discrimination statement and policy;
36. Following an anti-harassment policy with reporting mechanisms, processes, and disciplinary procedures;
37. Policies on benefits, training and leave;

38. Grievance resolution process;
39. Flex time and accommodation for employees;
40. Facilities designed to meet accessibility requirements;
41. We anonymously survey employees on gender identity, race/ethnicity, disability status, and other demographic factors to track the diversity of our workforce;
42. We have a formal statement on the intended social or environmental impact of our company's philanthropy;
43. We match individual workers' charitable donations;
44. Compliance with all local laws and regulations;
45. Compliance with international human rights and labor standards (for employees and contractors);
46. Payment at or above industry benchmarks;
47. Payment of a living wage (for employees and contractors);
48. Payment at or above industry benchmarks;
49. Payment of a living wage (for employees and contractors);
50. Our company shares resources with employees regarding environmental stewardship in home offices (e.g. energy efficiency);
51. We have a policy in place for the safe disposal of e-waste and other hazardous materials purchased for employee home offices;
52. Employees are provided with a list of environmentally-preferred vendors for office supplies;
53. The Company has formal policies to review the accuracy and ethics of marketing and advertising;
54. Company complies with independent marketing and advertising standards relevant to their sector or industry;
55. Company has programs in place to promote social and or environmental causes through its marketing and advertising; and
56. Compliance and education about COVID-19 in accordance with available legal guidance.

Nova strives to continue to improve its B Impact Assessment score which measures Nova's tangible progress in the following areas: Governance, Workers, Community, Environment and Customers.

In addition to the above, the corporation has created general public benefit public benefit in several ways: commitment to perform all due-diligence assessments on a carbon neutral basis, enacted employee centric policies that encourage employees to engage/volunteer in their local communities.

There are no circumstances that hindered efforts to pursue or create general public benefit. B Lab's third-party standard is being applied in a manner consistent with the third-party standard's application in the prior reports. Nova has completed the same B Lab questionnaire and understands the standard remains consistent.

Respectfully,

/s/ Steven B. Cummings 1/12/22

Steven B. Cummings  
Nova Group, GBC  
Chief Executive Officer



Nova  
Group,  
*gbc*

# Annual Benefit Corporation Report

# 2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Who We Are
  - 02** Our Values
  - 03** Our Impact
  - 04** Our Culture
  - 05** B Corp
  - 06** In Closing
- 

# Who We Are

Nova Group, GBC is a renowned international advisory firm with a multidisciplinary presence, delivering a wide array of environmental, engineering, and energy services across the globe, including North America. Established in Minnesota in 1987, Nova has grown into a respected player within the private environmental and engineering sector. Our steadfast commitment to service excellence remains a hallmark of our company ethos.



## OUR PURPOSE

We unite people with knowledge as a catalyst to change our world.

## OUR MISSION

Professionals providing our clients solutions for the man made and natural environments.





# Our Values

Our core values encompass people, property, and the planet. We prioritize personal growth and well-being, maintain and enhance the built environment, and uphold environmental responsibility. These values guide our decisions, reflecting a holistic approach that extends beyond profits to our environment, communities, and people around us.



## Corporate Social Responsibility

We are committed to using our core competencies and global structure to improve lives around the world. We collaborate with others that share our values in a collective effort to multiply positive social change. Our focus is on people, property, planet.



We believe our people are our greatest asset. We empower our people to serve their local communities with focus on education, hunger, military family support, and other outreach activities valued by them and Nova alike.



We are committed to the way we do business to improve environmental management by recycling paper and waste, reducing our energy consumption and supporting our people in their remote working arrangements.



We value property and the homes and offices we spend so much time in. We are there to support when disaster strikes, to lend our skills to offset challenges and to find solutions enabling forward progress.

# Nova Cares

Nova Cares is a reflection of our values:

**C** Commitment  
**A** Accountability  
**R** Respect  
**E** Educate  
**S** Serve

Nova Group  
*Cares*

This serves as a representation of how Nova carries out a unique process. From corporate to on-site services, we have confidence that our employees carry out their responsibilities with regard to these guiding principles.





# Our Impact

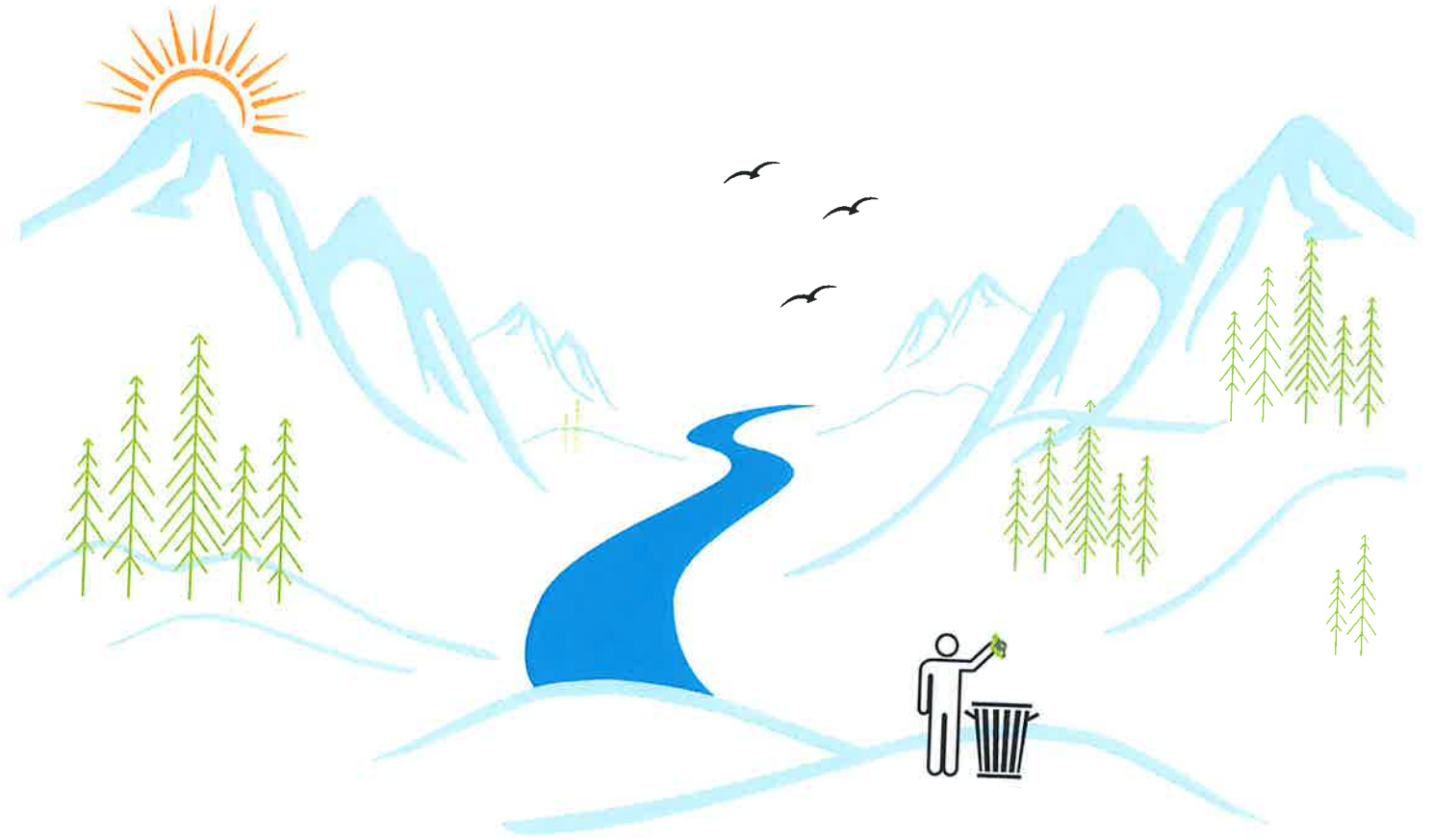
Beyond our articles of incorporation, we've made a commitment to measure our impact in four key segments:

**1** Our Environment

**2** Our Communities

**3** Our Customers

**4** Our Employees



# Environment

At Nova, we're unwavering in our commitment to cherish and safeguard the environment. Guided by the principles of science and sustainability, we boldly forge a path to shrink both our ecological and carbon footprints, propelling forth positive transformation. From paperless reporting to energy efficiency, we actively pursue ways to diminish our impact, going beyond compliance.

# The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

As part of our strategy to combat climate change, Nova Group has committed to a Net-Zero Carbon 2030 Plan that is aligned with the B Corp Community, United Nations Global Compact, and is focused on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). One component of our Net-Zero 2030 Plan is to provide Nova Group Carbon Neutral Due Diligence Assessments.

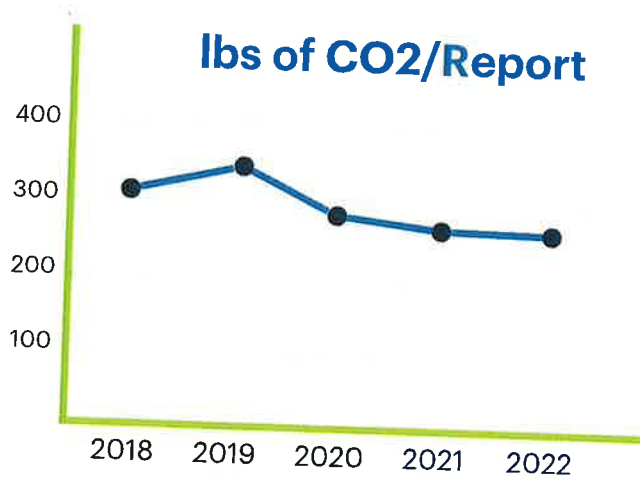


UNITED NATIONS  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP



# Achieving Net-Zero By 2030

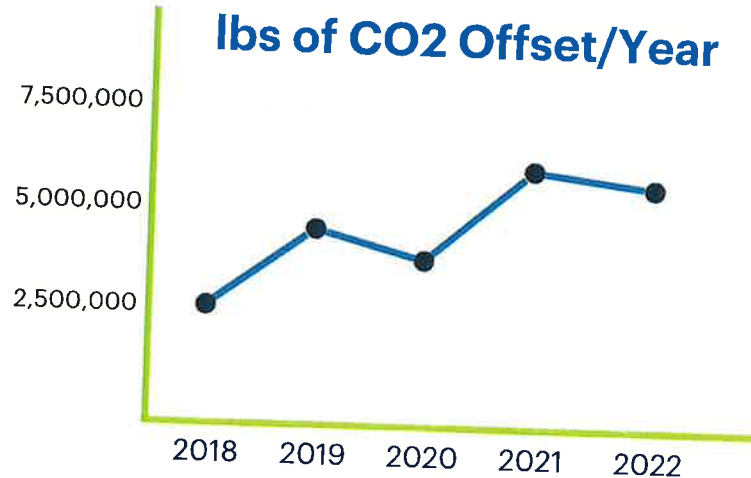
Nova works diligently to reduce our CO2 emissions every year. In fact, we have started to track the number of pounds of CO2 generated for each report we complete.



As we strive to eliminate our CO2 emissions, we've joined forces with Cool Effect, a trusted third-party verifier and supplier of carbon offsets. This strategic partnership is a triple win for Nova, our clients, and the planet, propelling us towards Net-Zero by 2030 while aiding our clients in reducing their environmental impact.

**\$43,000**

donated in Cool Effect projects since 2020





Nova partners with Cool Effect, an organization that seeks to create a community built around one simple vision: give people the power and confidence to band together and reduce the carbon pollution that causes climate change.

### For the Birds

This project maintains a remarkable ecosystem of old-growth forests and natural habitats.



593,043 lbs of CO2 offset

### Take a Hike

The Chestnut Mountain project brings climate-smart forestry practices to the Appalachians.



593,043 lbs of CO2 offset

### Affordable Cookstoves

This project makes and distributes cookstoves that reduce charcoal or wood use for cooking by over 50%. It cuts carbon emissions and deforestation while providing lifechanging health benefits and cost savings to local families.



934,760 lbs of CO2 offset

### Methane Capture

Since the beginning of time, the mountains of Colorado have been shifting. When they shift, gases from deep inside the core of the earth are released. The Southern Ute Tribe has learned how to capture this leaking gas and redirect it into energy.



275,578 lbs of CO2 offset

### Trash to Treasure

By capturing the methane being released from the landfill, the project is supplying the island of Mauritius with clean, renewable energy instead of shipping in dirty coal.



4,704,665 lbs of CO2 offset

### Cooking with Gas

This project builds biogas digesters for families that capture methane emissions from waste and convert it to renewable energy.



1,527,803 lbs of CO2 offset





## One Tree Planted

One Tree Planted works with local partners to reforest areas that would most benefit from newly planted trees. And where reforestation occurs, it is conducted wisely in everything from the tree species chosen to the distance between trees to the exact location where trees are being planted so that they do not create the potential for future harm if another fire comes along in the area.



**4,385 trees**

Planted in United States  
National Forests.





# Communities

Nova is proud to have impact on a global scale. Our efforts go toward supporting small businesses that use business as a force for good. We have partnered with organizations who share our values and show support through volunteering, philanthropy, and making changes with awareness for environmental and societal impact.



## Arm and Arm in Africa

Nova is proud to partner its efforts with an organization that aligns so well with our values. Arm in Arm in Africa (AIAIA) is a Minneapolis nonprofit that helps to provide education, food, and health care in urban and rural townships in South Africa.



Nova Group, GBC CEO Steve Cummings serves as a board member and hopes the partnership will continue to grow, as it did in July 2022 when Nova merged its all company gathering in the Twin Cities with AIAIA's annual "Homecoming" fundraising event. More than 230 Nova employees were in attendance.





Nova partners with Gifts for Good, a woman-owned business and Certified B Corporation™ dedicated to empowering the world to help people and the planet through gift-giving. Gifts for Good ethically purchase products from over 60 nonprofit and social enterprise makers.



**2,980**

Trees planted through Eden Reforestation Projects



**4,840**

Months of clean drinking water provided through Water for Good



**816**

Children will receive lifesaving vitamins for an entire year through Vitamin Angels



**2,272**

Meals provided to children through Giving Children Hope



**1,347**

Hours of care provided to rescue pets through Best Friends Animal Society



**785**

Dollars donated to Project Hope's Ukraine Relief Fund



**656**

Months of prenatal vitamins provided to moms in need for their entire pregnancy through Vitamin Angels



**95**

To treatment provided for cancer patients through the American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery program



**81**

Children will receive one month of school supplies through Giving Children Hope



**256**

Minutes of professional job training to a job seeker



**88**

Minutes provided of mental health coaching to at-risk-youth



**28**

Hours provided of mental health training for a healthcare worker



## Verdani Institute for the Built Environment

Earth's Climate Heroes is a children's book featuring a powerful yet accessible story on the causes of climate change, what solutions exist to heal our planet, and how each and every one of us can make a tangible difference in building a future that is vibrant, sustainable, and equitable.

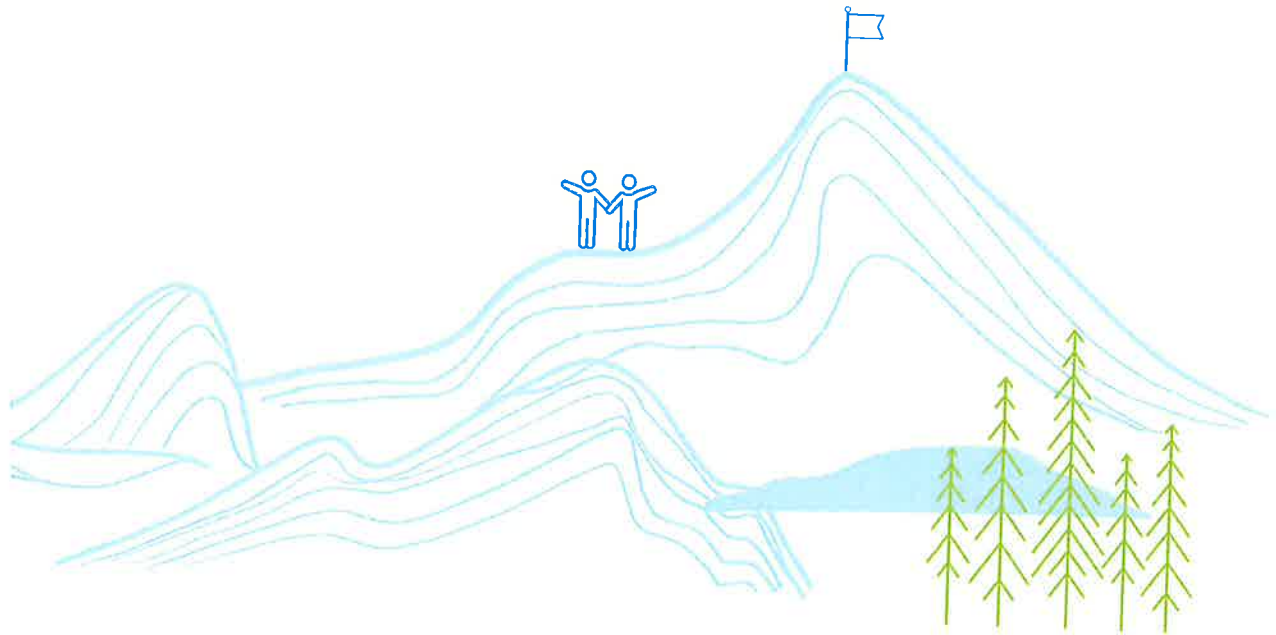
[#EarthsClimateHeroes](#)

**VIBE**

VERDANI INSTITUTE FOR  
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Nova is proud to partner with Verdani's #EarthsClimateHeroes initiative. We see this as an opportunity to help educate children about environmental sustainability, raise awareness for the cause, and empower future generations to benefit the planet.





# Customers

Nova's efforts align with customers as they have confidence in our ability to get the job done with expertise and the utmost care and consideration for the environment, including our carbon-neutral efforts. We have a mutually trusting relationship with our customers and see each job as an endeavor to collaborate and create something that benefits both people and the planet.

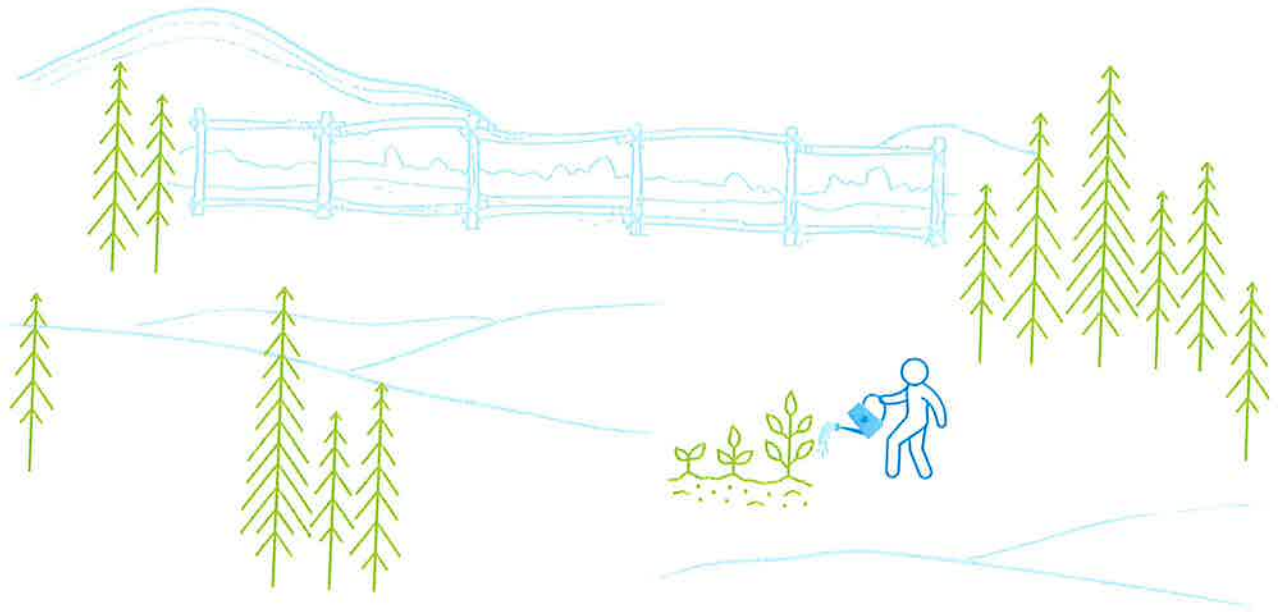
## Carbon Neutral Reports

As part of our strategy to combat climate change, Nova Group, GBC has committed to a Net-Zero Carbon 2030 Plan aligned with the B Corp Community, United Nations Global Compact, and focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG). Net-Zero 2030 is a company-wide initiative and includes our transformation of our operations, how we conduct business, consideration of our supply chain, and our customer interactions.

Nova Group, GBC completes every due diligence report on a carbon-neutral basis. We accomplish this by first calculating the carbon emissions for each project and looking for ways to minimize those emissions while completing the work.



Every report is done on a **Carbon Neutral** basis.



# Employees

Nova cares deeply about the well-being of each of our employees and their success in the workplace, emphasizing work-life balance. Nova strives for personal growth for each employee through providing a supportive work environment. Our current efforts lie in the implementation of wellness efforts.



## Work/Life Balance

Dedicated to cultivating and preserving our company culture, our focus is on fostering collaboration in the workplace while promoting an exceptional quality of life. This commitment is realized through a variety of measures, including:



Providing a supportive work environment through wellness programs, workload assessments, options to work from home, and flexible work schedules.



Encouraging balance with family-friendly policies, vacation policies, supportive leadership, transparency in mental health, and flexible PTO.



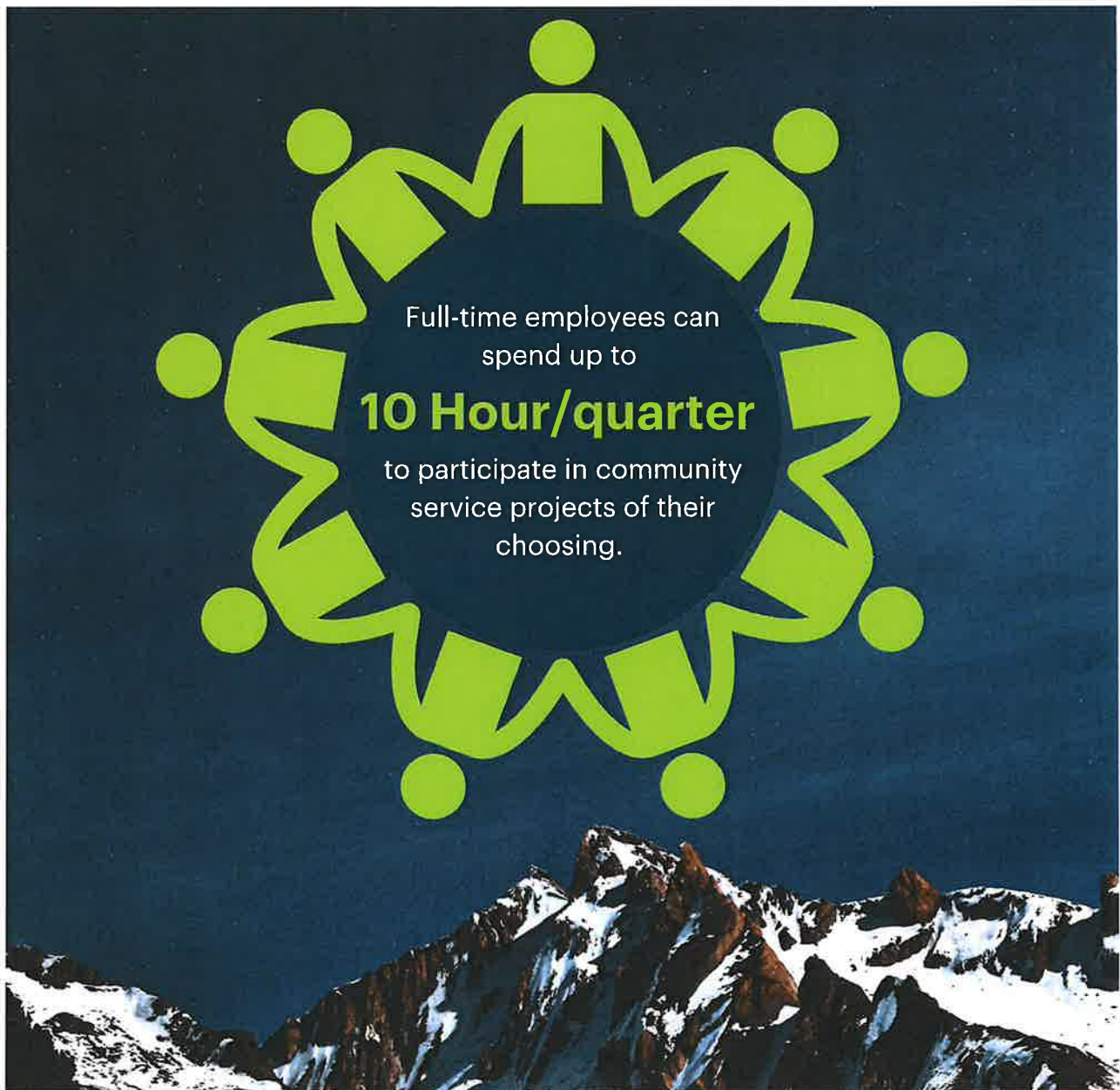


# Our Culture

Nova will endeavor to provide a collaborative work environment to sustain our team. We are grateful to have a dedicated group of individuals who align with our core values and push for daily growth.

# Community Involvement

Nova's culture is centered around giving back. We make it a point to positively impact our communities locally and globally through volunteering and philanthropic efforts.



## A Top Place To Work

We keep people at the forefront and strive to keep employees engaged with their voices heard. This brings forth a sense of community that both attracts and retains our valued team members.

“

Treat your employees right, and they will treat your clients right, and it is absolutely true. That's our number one, simple principle we try to operate with.

”

Nova was awarded the **Star Tribune's Top Workplaces award 2020**. This award is a testament to our consistency in people-first culture excellence. Winners are selected by those who know each company's culture best: the employees.





## Wellness Efforts

We believe promoting and embracing well-being is essential to our overall health - both at work and in our personal lives. Nova's goal is to continue incorporating health and wellness-minded activities that we hope will impact our employees lives in a positive way.



studio 9.5  
LIFE. BALANCE.

Wellness efforts include scheduled meditation and yoga classes provided by Studio 9 to 5, as well as themed speakers and promoting transparency in mental health. Nova staff has provided feedback and testimonials reflecting on their experiences and takeaways from some of these wellness efforts:

“

Class today was just what I needed. Time to stop and refocus

---

Today's yoga class was great and would recommend to others! I'm looking forward to doing it again soon

”

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a river with white water rapids flows over large, dark rocks. The middle ground shows a valley with green grass and small trees. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a sky filled with dramatic, dark blue and white clouds. A dark blue rectangular text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# B Corp

Nova made the active decision that becoming a General Benefit Corporation (GBC) alone was not "good enough." We are currently under external review and verification that our daily actions, policies, and procedures align with our core values and going through rigorous applications to seek a Certified B Corp status.

# The B Corp Movement

B Lab is transforming the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet. A leader in economic systems change, their global network creates standards, policies, and tools for business, and they certify companies — known as B Corps — who are leading the way.



# B Impact Assessment



Nova is currently applying for status as a Certified B Corp, which means that our company's overall environmental and social performance is measured and independently verified by third-party B Lab.

**Certified**



**Corporation**

To be a Certified B Corp, a company must score a minimum of 80 on B Lab's Impact Assessment. Nova's most recent score is a 90.4.





*We Are*  
Nova  
Group,  
*gbc*

# In Closing

Nova is a Certified B Corp, which means that our company's overall environmental and social performance is measured and independently verified by third-party B Lab. To be a Certified B Corp, a company must score a minimum of 80 out of 200 points on B Lab's Impact Assessment.

We chose B Lab for the third-party verification required under the Minnesota General Benefit Corporation statute because we believe their experience certifying thousands of companies and their social and environmental performance standards are the most comprehensive and aspirational available.



**Work Item 1466824200032**  
**Original File Number 5M-979**

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
FILED  
**04/01/2024 11:59 PM**

*Steve Simon*

Steve Simon  
Secretary of State