

The background image shows an aerial perspective of a vast ocean. The water is a deep teal or blue-green color, with intricate patterns of white and light blue foam created by breaking waves. The texture of the sea is visible, showing the movement and energy of the water.

Highland Group Sustainability Report 2021

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2021 marked two important milestones: our twentieth year in business, and our fifth year as a Certified B Corporation. Both are cause for celebration and reflection.

First, to celebrate: Coming through the Covid-19 pandemic with the widespread availability of vaccines, we were able to welcome our team back to the office in July with a hybrid schedule and gather in late August for our twentieth-anniversary party. We were also honored to be recognized for the second time as a Best for the World: Community B Corporation in the small business category.

Second, to reflect: The longer we're in business, the more important it is that our mission and vision are aligned for producing good in the world. What can a small business do to make an impact? That's where being a Certified B Corporation comes in.

Being a B Corp is the clearest way for us to walk the walk: holding ourselves to high standards for treating people and the planet on par with profits. Could we be more profitable? Yes — but at what cost if we're not leaving the world a better place than when we started?

Being part of the community of B Corporations means our efforts are joined with other like-minded companies to make a difference.

B Corporations like Highland Group:

- Spend time volunteering in their communities
- 4X more likely to hire the majority of their managers from local communities
- 4.5X more likely to use 100% renewable energy
- More likely to provide employees with flexible work schedules and offer bonuses or profit-sharing

We are proud to be part of this growing movement, and proud to do our part to model the kind of business the world needs more of: those that meet rigorous standards for social and environmental impact, practice transparency and show meaningful accountability to all stakeholders.

Yours in Hope and Progress,
Scott + Jen Crowley



Highland Group was the 9th Certified B Corporation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We joined a prestigious group that includes Atomic Object, Brewery Vivant, Cascade Engineering, the Gluten Free Bar and Valley City Electronic Recycling, among others.

We Help Clients Grow + Transform

We help organizations leapfrog to the next level, transform for the next generation and bring the next game-changing idea to market.

We work with mission-aligned organizations that strive to be the best, not just in the world, but for the world.

Creative, Empathetic, Pragmatic

The HG approach is respectful of client time: projects move at a brisk pace, keeping in mind marketing must be out in the world to create measurable results.

Our Capabilities

- Advertising + marketing
- Branding
- Design + art direction
- Digital strategy
- Website development
- Communications



We Are Best for the World

It's a virtuous cycle: thriving communities help businesses flourish, and in turn, flourishing companies help their communities thrive.

Best For the World: Community Award

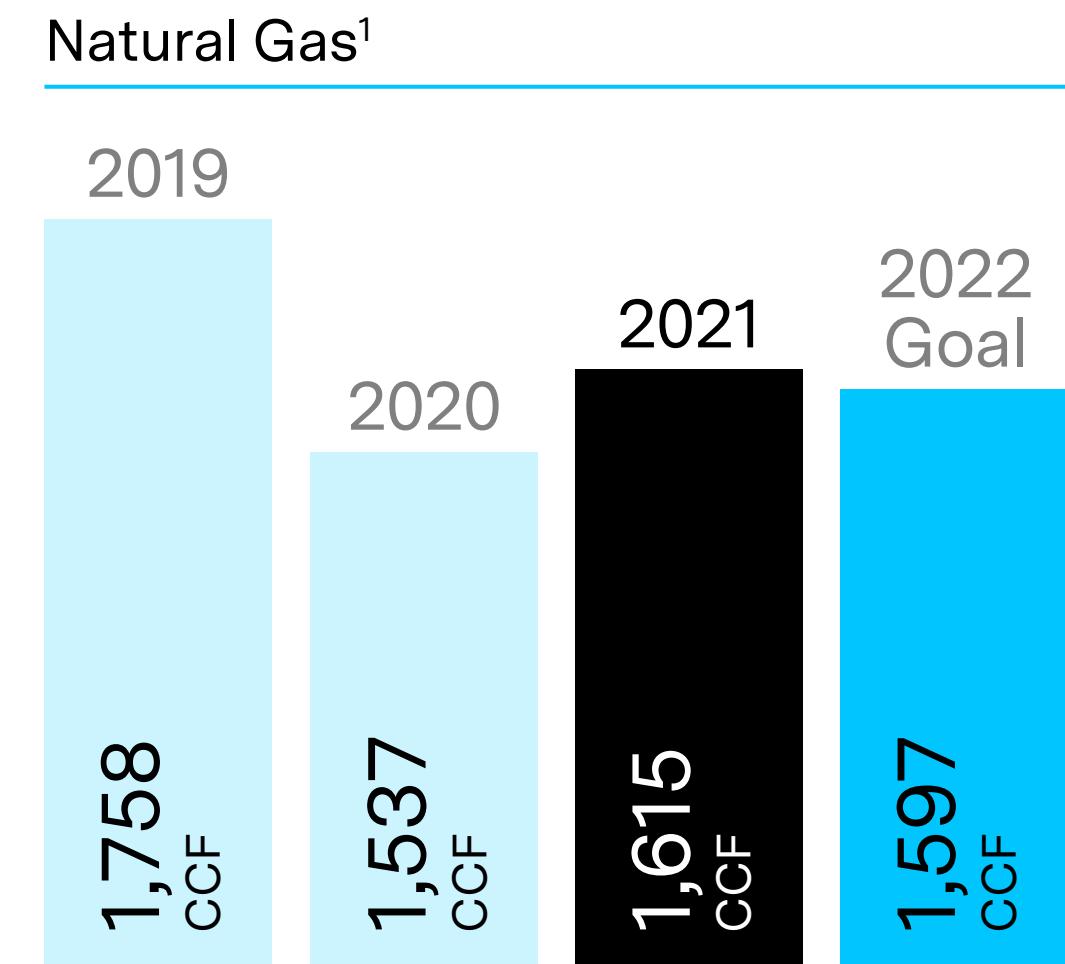
In 2021, Highland Group was recognized for the second time as a Best For The World: Community honoree for our contributions to the economic and social well-being of West Michigan. This honor is awarded to businesses ranked in the top 5% of all B Corps in the world and recognizes our charitable giving, investment in diversity and educational opportunities as a means of building a shared and sustainable prosperity for all.

2020 was an outlier for many of our environmental measures, due to the extended work-from-home orders caused by Covid-19. Our new hybrid office schedule continues to impact these numbers.

	Waste
2019	↑1.4%
2020	↓55.2%
2021	↑1.6%
2022 Goal	↑2.4%

	Water
2019	↓16%
2020	↓2.0%
2021	↓1.8%
2022 Goal	↓2.0%

	Energy
2019	↓18%
2020	↓12%
2021	↓3.0%
2022 Goal	↓4.6%



¹CCF represents a unit of volume equal to one hundred cubic feet.

Carbon Footprint Allowance Utilization

Highland Group offers a “Lower Your Carbon Footprint” employee benefit which provides reimbursement toward environmentally-friendly and efficient modes of transportation. Team members are reimbursed for running/walking shoes, bike purchase/maintenance/repair and/or public transit.

2019	16%
2020	0%
2021	0%
2022 Goal	7.6%

New this year, Highland Group is reporting on the company's relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Clients

65 active clients
85% local clients
24% purpose driven

Civic Engagement

Highland Group employees may use company time for volunteer work.

In 2021, Highland Group launched a 2.5% Community Give Back program which directed 2.5% of our operating margin to local community organizations that advocate for access to resources, connections and knowledge for all.

Last year, we directed 2.5% of our profits to local organizations including private high schools and local non-profit organizations. Additionally, HG leadership is involved in an advisory or board capacity for eight community organizations.

Our implementation of a 2.5% Planet Give Back was delayed in 2021 and will be launched in 2022.

Workers + Community

Employee Benefits

Highland Group provides comprehensive health and wellness benefits.

Non-exempt employee compensation includes base salary, 401K, Roth savings plan, 3% safe harbor contribution, bonus and profit sharing, social security, workers compensation and unemployment.

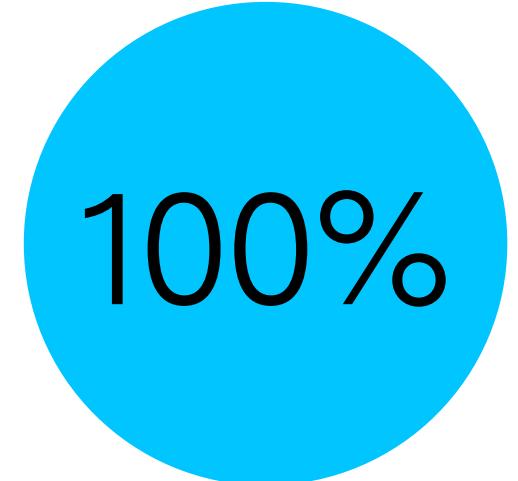
Non-exempt employees are eligible for health benefits including health and prescription insurance, dental, life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, maternity or paternity leave, paid bereavement, paid holidays, paid time off and paid jury leave.

Training + Development

As we've grown, Highland Group has evolved our organizational chart to provide clear opportunities for lateral and promotional job changes. Working with leadership, each person had the opportunity to share career goals and co-create their own training and development goals.

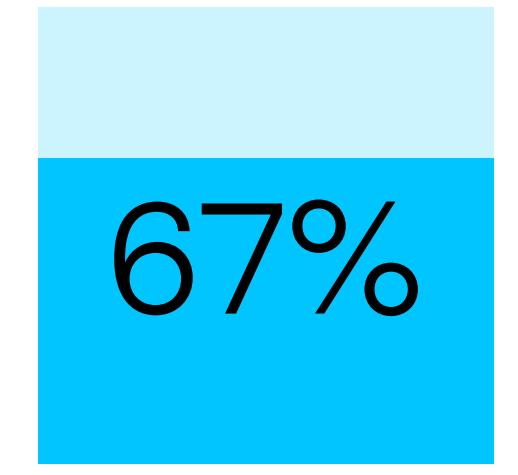
Flexible Work Schedules

Our new, post-Covid work schedule includes a Monday and Friday work-from-home option, with Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday as preferred in-office working days.



100%

paid above living wage



67%

female employees

Bonus plan + profit sharing available to all full-time employees

3 hourly workers (exempt)

21 salaried workers (non-exempt)

+5 net new jobs
8.3% attrition

Where possible, Certified B Corporations are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on all of their stakeholders. Because Highland Group is registered as in the State of Michigan, where there is no benefit corporation or constituency status, Highland Group has written this commitment into our articles of incorporation.

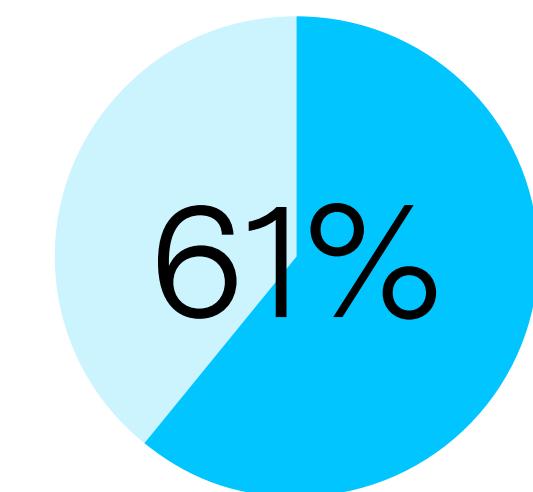
Governance

HG insists on the highest ethical standards in conducting its business. Doing the right thing and acting with integrity are two of the primary driving forces behind our success. When faced with ethical issues, employees are expected to make the right professional decision consistent with the company's principles and standards.

Highland Group has an employee code of conduct as well as policies related to non-harassment, no retaliation, workplace violence, conflict of interest, no solicitation, workplace safety, whistleblower and data security.

Local Suppliers, Including Banking + Finance

To effectively conduct our business, Highland Group has relationships with multiple banks. Currently, all lending is done through local banks.



of all expenditures outside human capital were through local vendors



In addition to the environmental and 2.5% for the Planet goals noted above, Highland Group plans to implement a new performance review process and monthly *Lunch + Learn* sessions in 2022.

We will continue to strengthen our recycling, composting and elimination of single-use plastics policies by strengthening our corporate behavior and increasing training and behavioral incentives for individual employees.

Visits and Scotch Tasting by Appointment

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Drop a line: hello@wearehg.com
Give us a call: [616-528-8936](tel:616-528-8936)

#wearehg
#makeyourmark

