

Overview

On March 25 & 26, 2026, over 50 attendees from more than 35 organizations gathered at The Nature Place for a La Crosse regional gathering of WI-CAN (Wisconsin Climate Action Navigators). The event was jointly hosted by Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region, and OSCE (Wisconsin's Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy).

The event was designed to: (1) Support shared understanding of La Crosse regional work on sustainable and affordable housing; (2) Enhance skills in applying the concepts and tools of resilience and circular economy within the climate action movement; (3) Strengthen connections among WI-CAN organizations within the La Crosse region; (4) Invite new La Crosse organizations into WI-CAN; and (5) Gather information on climate action priorities, work, and support desired for WI-CAN organizations in the La Crosse region.

Attendees learned about Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region's ReNew the Block directly from the initiative's participants and partners, took part in a skill-building training focused on regenerative economies, and participated in topic-specific small-group action planning. They also toured [Habitat for Humanities' ReNew the Block initiative](#), and heard from a moderated panel of community leaders working on climate action and resilience within the greater La Crosse region.

Themes that emerged from the event will help shape WI-CAN's strategic plan. These include:

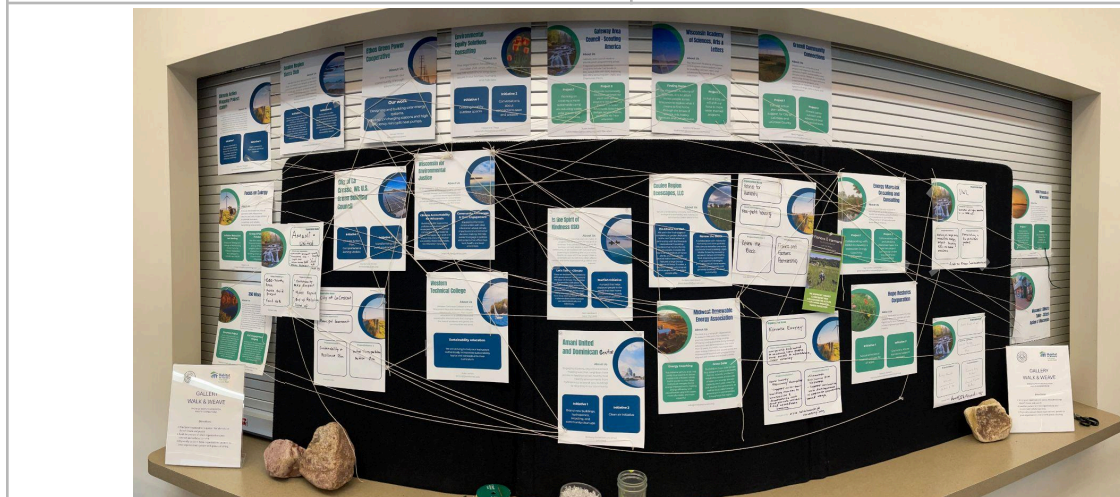
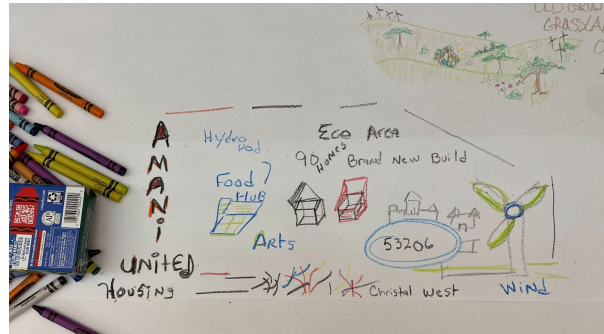
- Expanding cross-sector partnerships
- Investing in trust, relationships, and community-led engagement
- Moving from conversation to action
- Dismantling systemic barriers to energy equity, access and affordability
- Understanding levers for behavior change

Evaluations of the event as of April 4 have been overwhelmingly positive, with participants giving the event an average of 4.6 out of 5 stars. Respondents valued the opportunity to connect, learn and be inspired – and recommended that future events provide increased support for taking action.

The gathering was designed, led and staffed by a team from OSCE and Habitat for Humanity of Greater La Crosse Region with extensive help from GreenR Community Connections. Please see linked Appendices below for attendees and materials.

SUSTAINABLE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN THE GREATER LA CROSSE REGION

WI-CAN Regional Gathering
March 25 & 26, 2026



Summary: March 25 & 26, 2026

Topics and Themes

On the afternoon of the second day, participants identified topics related to the work they are currently doing. Topics selected were:

- Energy Efficiency, Home Repairs and Healthy Homes
- Neighborhood Revitalization, Climate Resilience, and Affordable Housing
- Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity, and Habitat Conservation
- Local Clean Energy & Electrification
- Energy Justice, Affordability and Utility Accountability

Cross-cutting themes emerged from participants' discussions and report-outs. These topics and themes, as well as the detailed transcription of small-group work that generated them, will be used to inform WI-CAN's strategic planning work.

1. Expanding Cross-Sector Partnerships

Participants emphasized that stronger outcomes come from aligning existing efforts across organizations and sectors. Identifying overlaps, reaching out to new and trusted partners, and working across traditional boundaries can expand reach, fill gaps, and save money.

2. Investing in Trust, Relationships, and Community-Led Engagement

Trust and relationships are foundational, with emphasis on working through trusted messengers, local networks, and existing community connections. People must be actively involved in shaping solutions to build credibility and sustained engagement.

3. Moving from Conversation to Action

There is a strong desire for tangible progress, with calls for defined action steps and follow-through. Participants highlighted the importance of identifying willing leaders, organizing for action, and ensuring that conversations generate implementation.

4. Dismantling Systemic Barriers to Energy Equity, Access and Affordability

Participants identified structural barriers to energy justice — including costs, permitting processes, and utility influence — that limit access, affordability, and equity. Identifying leverage points that lead to systems change is important.

5. Understanding Levers for Behavior Change

Change happens through shared learning, peer exchange, and visible examples. It's important to meet people where they are at. Storytelling, real-life examples, and practical solutions help translate ideas into adoption and sustained behavior change.

Next Steps

Next steps for WI-CAN coming out of this and other regional gatherings include:

- Continue articulating WI-CAN's mission, metrics and strategies [draft by Summer 2026]
 - Sources include this work, the final CCAP (due out later this year), and additional feedback and guidance from WI-CAN members including from other WI-CAN regional and statewide gatherings.
 - Develop implementation & evaluation plans – including specific, actionable next steps – to support action and learning.
- Continue strengthening climate action movement in Wisconsin [ongoing]
 - Provide backbone infrastructure (including funding) to convene members, strengthen communication, articulate shared mission and mutually reinforcing activities, and develop shared metrics.
 - See 2026 calendar of gatherings in Appendices.

Appendices

- [Participant Agenda](#)
- Presentation Slides
 - [Event](#)
 - [ReNew the Block](#)
 - [Regenerative Economy](#)
- [Attendee List](#)
- [Transcription](#) and [images](#) of Day 2 small group work results
- [Evaluation results as of April 4](#)
- [2026 calendar of WI-CAN events](#)
- [Organization Posters](#)