



# INNOVATIVE IMPACTS

The continuing story of how the **1 Hotels Fellowship at E2** is helping launch a new generation of sustainability-focused business leaders reshaping America's economic future

1  
HOTELS





### Youth unbound

America's economy is the world's most dynamic. Upon reviewing this year's class of Fellows, it's clear optimistic young thinkers with big dreams, innovative ideas and an unwavering faith in the future are a major reason why.

In its first three years, the 1 Hotels Fellowship at E2 has welcomed into the program 30 promising young women and men. Among data science students at elite East Coast universities, community organizers in the Midwest and farmers on the Front Range of the Rockies, the Fellowship is growing in notoriety — and impact.

Our Fellows are progressing in their careers at a staggering pace. One first-year Fellow, Salem Afeworki, just landed a job as sustainability manager for the City of Costa Mesa, Calif. Another Fellow, Cory Connolly, is now vice president of policy at the Michigan Energy Innovation Council.

Among Fellows completing projects late last year, a Lauren Hafford-led team was just awarded a \$1.6 million federal grant to help sustainable farming techniques proliferate. Another, Tasfia Nayem, is now a senior climate policy advisor in the New York City Mayor's Office, while James Ray is working as an analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Vanessa Perkins is starting her own EV nonprofit and Thomas Dowling co-founded a venture capital-backed startup.

Witnessing this progress is one of the most gratifying parts of my job. I look forward to collaborating with the newest class of **1 Hotels Fellows at E2** — and tracking their careers for years to come.

**Bob Keefe**  
Executive director, E2



## The 1 Hotels Fellows' journey so far — and where they're headed next

The 1 Hotels Fellowship at E2 was announced on Earth Day 2017 in Brooklyn. Designed to support and develop young entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders seeking to make the world a better place through projects that expand our economy and protect our environment, the second class of 10 Fellows — the Class of 2018–19 — recently completed year-long projects.

The third class of 10 Fellows were announced in February 2020 at an in-person training in San Francisco and will complete their projects by the end of 2020.

The fellowship program is an ongoing partnership between mission-driven luxury hotel brand 1 Hotels and E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs), a national nonpartisan business group that advocates for policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment. An affiliate of the Natural Resources Defense Council, E2 is facilitator of the program.

Crucial to the success of each individual project has been the pairing of Fellows with mentors. Drawn from E2's membership base of more than 1,000 business leaders across the country, mentors offer strategic guidance and open up their vast professional networks to a new generation of business leaders.



## 1 HOTEL FELLOWS AT E2 Class of 2018–19

**From left:** Jordan Wildish, Abe Serrano, Jesse Barlow, Daniel Turner, Vanessa Perkins, Lauren Hafford and James Ray.

**Not pictured:** Thomas Dowling, Tremaine Phillips and Tasfia Nayem.



# 1 Hotels Fellows at E2

## Class of 2018–19 \ Projects Completed

### A RECAP OF THE FIRST CLASS OF PROJECTS:



## JESSE BARLOW

Project Manager, People Production Media Services Inc. \ Denver

**Location**  
Colorado

**Themes & Industries**  
EVs, EV Charging Stations, Documentary Films, State Transportation Policy, Energy Efficiency, Real Estate

### Project Description

Colorado's population is booming. Every day, more cars hit the road and more commercial and residential buildings are constructed. How can more Coloradans purchase, drive — and recharge — zero-emission vehicles? Video camera in hand and a recent career change in the rear-view mirror, Jesse's project tells the story of Colorado's rapid transition to electric vehicles. He produced two short documentaries on EVs, focusing his lens on their current market penetration (including at a veteran-owned taxi company in Grand Junction) and the economic and environmental opportunities of incorporating more EV charging stations into new multi-family housing construction. Now, Jesse's mini-docs are on the film festival circuit. Inspired to pursue filmmaking after reading a Naomi Klein book, Jesse said the Fellowship helped set him on a new path: **"I was in a rough career and personal patch when this opportunity came up, and it's really changed my life."**



## LAUREN HAFFORD

Evaluation Coordinator, FARMS \ Longmont, Colorado

**Location**

Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska

### Themes & Industries

Agriculture, Data Science, Federal Policy, Organizing

### Project Description

Few American business owners understand climate change like farmers, especially ones in Colorado who practice a form of agriculture called regenerative farming. While the climate benefits of using practices like no-till farming, cover crops, reduced fallow and increased crop diversity are indisputable, farmers have struggled to make them pay. Lauren's project identified Front Range farmers innovating methods to keep soil healthy and, therefore, sequestering more carbon. Lauren earned these farmers' trust, secured access to their copious data, then anonymized it to create models that dig into correlations between high soil organic matter and harvest income. She shared this data with her farmer network, organized regular meetings to swap best practices, and wrote and published an op-ed in an influential local newspaper. Lauren said farmers believe in regenerative agriculture — but the economics must bear out for it to scale up enough to truly change a sector responsible for six percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Lauren's project is part of that change, helping lay the groundwork for a successful grant application to fund a soil health pilot in Colorado.



## THOMAS DOWLING

Co-founder and CEO, TaxProper \ Chicago

**Location**

Illinois

### Themes & Industries

Energy Efficiency, Small Business, Utilities, Community Associations

### Project Description

Too often, there's a disconnect between sustainability-focused financial incentives offered by utilities or federal, state and local governments and the people they're designed to benefit. In the Beverly/Morgan Park neighborhood of Chicago, Thomas wanted to bridge this gap. Through outreach efforts like a workshop attended by 40 people, Thomas helped residents, homeowners and local businesses leverage the one-time benefits of incentives like utility energy retrofit programs. He also worked with the local planning association to develop and distribute marketing materials highlighting various available incentives. Now the founder and CEO of a venture capital-backed property tax startup, Thomas views his Fellowship as a model for his own ongoing civic engagement as his business career takes off.







## TASFIA NAYEM

Senior Policy Advisor, NYC Mayor's Office of Climate \ New York City

### Location

North Carolina and New York

### Themes & Industries

Public Transit, EVs, Buses, Finance, Municipalities, States, Batteries, Communications

### Project Description

When was the last time you were on an electric bus? In China, it's a daily occurrence, with nearly half a million electric buses on the road. In the U.S., it's a different story — we have only 300. Tasfia, a New York City native who grew up taking public transportation in the Big Apple, started thinking more critically about municipal transport while studying for a master's degree at Duke. Through research and interviews, she identified three major obstacles keeping the brakes on the growth of America's electric bus fleet — small order sizes, range anxiety and high initial costs compared to diesel buses. Tasfia also uncovered available financing solutions like battery leasing and bulk procurement, then developed fact sheets and a website she's distributing to municipalities nationwide. Turns out, we know the answers to getting more electric buses on America's roads. Thanks to the Fellowship, Tasfia is ensuring the people who make crucial purchasing decisions know, too.



### Why Electric Buses?

- Lower greenhouse gas emissions
- Local health benefits
- Become greener over time
- Lower operations/maintenance cost
- Quiet, comfortable riding experience
- Fixed, predictable routes
- Stored in a garage overnight
- City or regional jurisdiction



## VANESSA PERKINS

Senior Outreach Consultant, Resource Innovations \ Chicago

### Location

Illinois

### Themes & Industries

EVs, Commercial Real Estate, Non-Profits, Apps

### Project Description

Many Chicago EV drivers — especially those in the city's southern and western parts — don't have access to enough affordable charging stations. Too often, the charging stations are located in driveways of single-family homes or in parking lots where it costs \$10 or more just to raise the yellow entrance gate. Vanessa spent the duration of her Fellowship looking into this problem, which continues to hold back EV deployment in the country's third most-populous city. Driving around Chicagoland in her own EV, Vanessa identified and connected with owners of underused parking lots at churches, stores and other sites. Then she partnered with EV charging infrastructure companies and app developers to create a guide aimed at turning these lightly trafficked locations into busy, low-cost charging stations. Unexpected outcomes of her work included the pending creation of a non-profit called Community Charging, and the realization that business development was one of Vanessa's hidden professional strengths and a growing passion.



## TREMAINE PHILLIPS

Commissioner, Michigan Public Service Commission \ Lansing

### Location

Ohio

### Themes & Industries

Real Estate, Energy Efficiency

### Project Description

Tremaine began work developing a network of building and property owners committed to creating sustainable, high-performing buildings in Cincinnati's urban core. His Fellowship was another step in Tremaine's impressive career that launched him to his current role — commissioner at the influential Michigan Public Service Commission, whose mission is to ensure Michigan residents have access to safe, reliable energy services at reasonable rates. Tremaine was appointed to his position by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in late 2019.



## JAMES RAY

Program Analyst, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \ Washington, D.C.

### Location

North Carolina

### Themes & Industries

Agriculture, Water Quality, GIS

### Project Description

In the past several decades, the biggest threat to the water quality of our rivers, streams and lakes has shifted from point to non-point sources. In other words, it's not so much a pipe directly spewing toxic pollution from a factory into waterways; rather, pollution nowadays more often comes from non-point sources like nutrient-rich agricultural runoff. This is the situation facing North Carolina's popular Jordan Lake, which is susceptible to harmful algal blooms and eutrophication. James' project took a deep, data-driven dive into mitigating agricultural runoff into Jordan Lake by encouraging local farmers to utilize farming practices like planting a cereal rye cover crop or adopting no-till practices. By creating an analytical report showing how these practices can boost farmers' profits while cleaning Jordan Lake's watershed, James has provided local stakeholders with an invaluable tool as they convene to address the region's water management issues.







## ABE SERRANO

Founder and Director of Design, Water UX \ Los Angeles

### Location

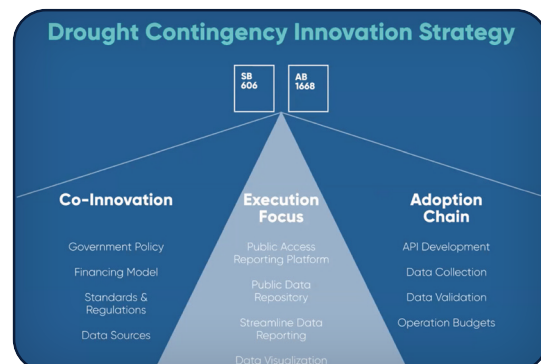
California

### Themes & Industries

Water, Data Science, State Policy

### Project Description

In recent years the California State Legislature passed two bills — SB 606 and AB 1668 — which are essentially unfunded mandates designed to conserve water across a state experiencing more frequent and more severe droughts. With his background in design and technology, Abe used his Fellowship to find ways to help the state's 400-plus water districts comply with the bills' water conservation and planning measures. His work is leading to development of a user-friendly, open-sourced data platform integrating water management, drought contingency planning and data transparency. Abe wants the platform to be able to generate revenue through data customization. **"I saw an opportunity to leverage my background in design and technology to launch a solution,"** Abe said.



## JORDAN WILDISH

Project Director, Earth Economics \ Seattle

### Location

California

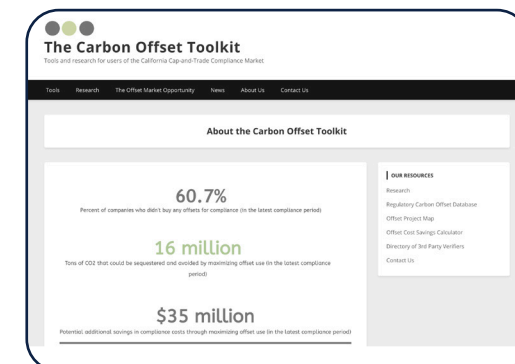
### Themes & Industries

California Climate Policy, Carbon Offsets, Cap-and-Trade, Data Science

### Project Description

California is home to one of the largest cap-and-trade markets in the world. But what happens when that market operates inefficiently, costing companies money while simultaneously erecting barriers to cutting carbon emissions fueling climate change?

Thanks to the Fellowship, Jordan had a year to pursue answers to this complex question. Speaking with 40 carbon offset market stakeholders, Jordan learned one of the biggest problems was a lack of readily available information on carbon offsets. So he built a user-friendly, web-based "toolkit" to allow, for example, utility companies to search and filter automatically updating databases that track myriad carbon offset opportunities. **"What [the Fellowship] does in terms of allowing folks to answer these big, complicated, year-long questions is really incredible,"** Jordan said. **"It's an amazing opportunity to put time toward this."**



## DANIEL TURNER

Creative Director, Deep Time Media \ Washington, D.C.

### Location

Rhode Island

### Themes & Industries

Daniel produced, filmed and edited a video showcasing how one nascent clean energy industry — offshore wind — has the potential to spur growth across the U.S. economy, creating jobs for captains of commercial vessels, boat builders, entrepreneurs and others. The video, "Uber Drivers for Offshore Wind," is being heavily promoted by the industry's main lobby group, the American Wind Energy Association. The hope is that policymakers will see the video and realize just how much room the industry has to grow off our coasts. After all, there are about 20,000 offshore wind turbines in the world today, most in European waters. As for the U.S.? Just six. Thanks to fast-changing market dynamics and public education efforts like Daniel's video, that number is certain to rise.





## 1 HOTEL FELLOWS AT E2 Class of 2020–21

From left: Scott Tate,  
Nicole Mendoza, Grant Behnke,  
Mary Sketch, Neda Deylami,  
Jock Gilchrist, John Young,  
Caroline Normile, Jesse Goldstein,  
Bonnie Gurry.



# 1 Hotels Fellows at E2

Class of 2019–2020 \ Projects Ongoing

Scheduled completion date: **December 31, 2020**

A SNAPSHOT OF THE PROJECTS OUR CURRENT FELLOWS  
ARE WORKING ON RIGHT NOW:

### GRANT BEHNKE

Columbus, Ohio

Optimizing **sustainable hotel operations**  
in Ohio's capital.



### NEDA DEYLAMI

Chicago

Developing an **EV training curriculum**  
for car dealerships.

### JOCK GILCHRIST

Denver

Producing a short film and accompanying  
white paper on the **benefits of  
regenerative agriculture**.



### BONNIE GURRY

New York City and Nationwide

Building a **public database of renewable  
energy** investments available to individual  
investors across the country.



### NICOLE MENDOZA

Longmont, Colorado

Helping enable businesses **convert captured  
carbon** into marketable products.



### CAROLINE NORMILE

San Francisco

**Improving incentive programs** for Central  
Valley farmers and landowners who  
sequester carbon.

### MARY SKETCH

Knoxville, Tennessee

Telling stories about how historically  
**resource-dependent communities** are  
positioning their economies for low-carbon,  
prosperous futures.



### SCOTT TATE

Roanoke, Virginia

Raising the public profile of **innovative  
clean energy and sustainability-focused  
entrepreneurs** in central Appalachia.



### JOHN YOUNG

Washington, D.C., and New Jersey

Examining how more thoughtfully designed  
public-private partnerships can lead to  
more **solar PV ownership** in marginalized  
communities.

## Honor Roll

1 Hotels Fellows at E2

### Alumni Class of 2017–018

Bronte McGarrah \ Massachusetts

Greg Hopkins \ Colorado

Adam Fisher \ Washington, D.C.

Kevin Fitzwilliam \ Louisiana

Alex DeGolia \ Colorado

Cory Connolly \ Michigan

Marilyn White \ California

Salem Afeworki \ California

Adam Hasz \ Washington, D.C.

Genevieve Lang \ California





## How to Get Involved

At the early stages of their professional careers, the **1 Hotels Fellows at E2** and others in their generation will be heavily impacted by climate change.

And they're also the ones who will solve it.

Please contact Gail Parson at [\*\*gparson@e2.org\*\*](mailto:gparson@e2.org) to discuss how you can support E2 and the 1 Hotels Fellowship at E2.

As a mission-driven luxury lifestyle hotel brand inspired by nature, 1 Hotels cultivates the best of eco-conscious design and sustainable architecture, together with extraordinary comfort and an unrivaled level of service.



E2 is a national, nonpartisan group of business leaders, investors and professionals from every sector of the economy who advocate for policies that are good for the economy and good for the environment.