



Fellowship Program Summary

Impact, Outcomes, and
Experiences

2025-2026



LPC
ASSOCIATES

CivicSpark Fellows and Partners described the projects and goals they worked on, and how their fellowship year increased their skills, influenced their career interests, and increased agency capacity for community resilience.



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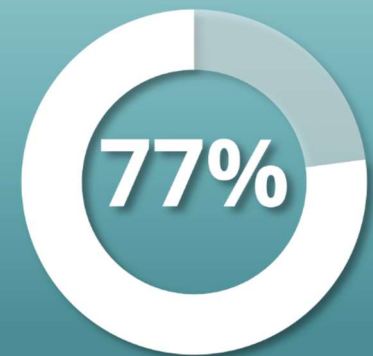
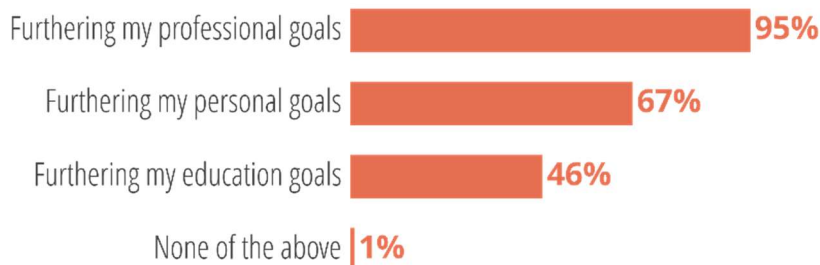
Executive Summary

CivicSpark creates public-service fellowships for career momentum and lasting community capacity building.

CivicSpark gives emerging professionals meaningful public-service experience, practical skills, and connections that help them move forward in their careers while contributing to stronger, more resilient communities.

- **98%** still use the skills they developed through their fellowship.
- **85%** currently work or study in a field involving community resilience.
- **69%** worked in or advancing their education in community resilience.
- **29%** obtained work directly connected to their host organization.

95% of CivicSpark Alumni who participated said their fellowship furthered their professional goals.



77% of Alumni **AGREED** or **STRONGLY AGREED** that their CivicSpark fellowship provided a pathway into the workforce.

Alumni since 2014 describe CivicSpark as a bridge between learning and professional practice. Through hands-on work, mentorship, and ownership of meaningful projects, they strengthened their confidence, communication, project management, data, outreach, and stakeholder-engagement skills. The experience helped many clarify their career direction and continue into public service, community resilience, energy, transportation, planning, and related fields.

"...I feel like CivicSpark overall really confirmed that I enjoyed...working with these local governments and community partners."

– CivicSpark Alum

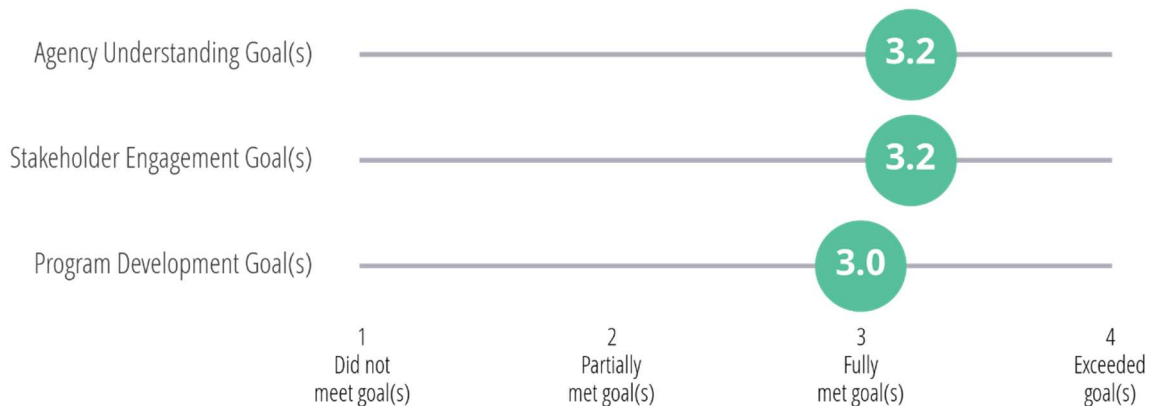


CivicSpark Fellows expand agency capacity and help important work move forward.

CivicSpark Fellows increase capacity to complete important work, improve efficiency, and advance projects that might otherwise have been delayed or left incomplete. Partners described stronger systems that improved effectiveness, while enhanced outreach and engagement helped agencies reach more residents, communities, and partners.

- **100%** of Partners reported increased capacity.
- **100%** reported increased effectiveness.
- **99%** reported improved efficiency.
- **99%** reported improved scale or reach.

On average, Partners met, and in some cases, exceeded their goals.



Partner feedback describes Fellows as dedicated teammates who add capacity to outreach, data, training, coordination, planning, evaluation, and community engagement. Fellows help agencies reach residents and stakeholders, strengthen processes, advance projects that might otherwise be delayed, and create practical tools, systems, and institutional knowledge that can continue serving communities after the fellowship ends.

“We would probably only be able to do three or four tabling [events]. And the past couple summers, including this summer, we’re going to end up doing 12 different tabling sessions. With the Fellows, we’re able to actually talk to our community and be visible, tell them about our programs, and allow them to ask questions. I think it helps us to build public trust and reach adults and renters that we may not always get to talk to.”

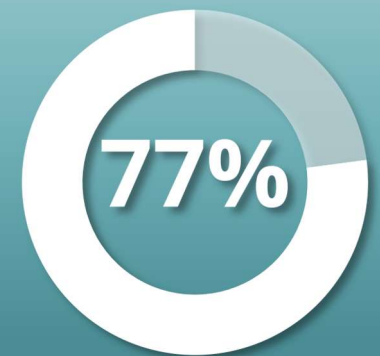
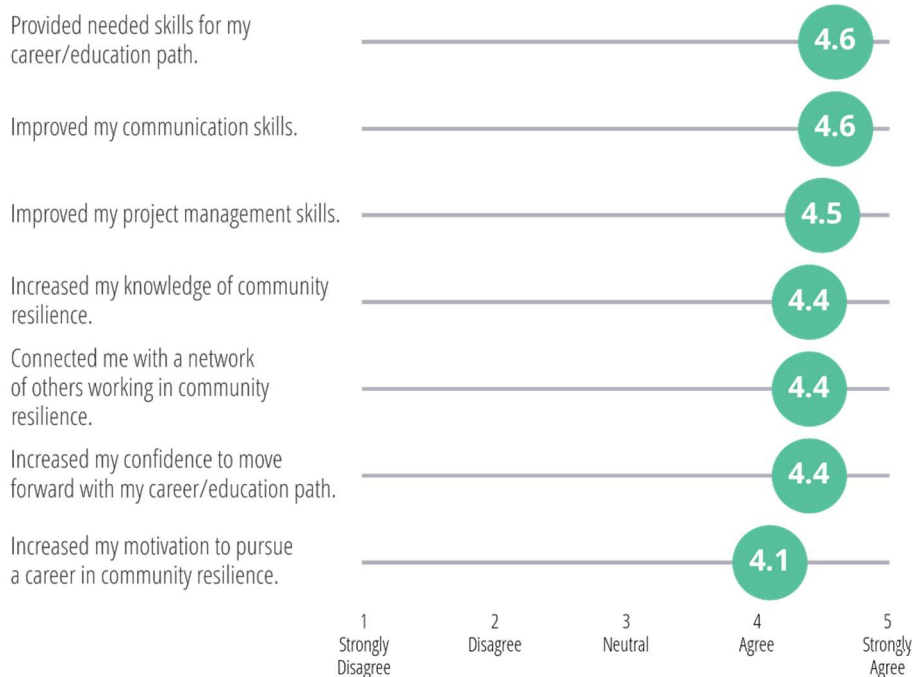
– CivicSpark Site Supervisor

CivicSpark serves as a **catalyst**, connecting professional growth with public-service impact; helping Fellows advance while strengthening the organizations and communities they serve.

CivicSpark Alumni Experience

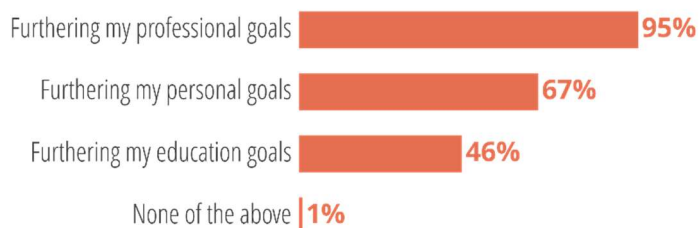
CivicSpark Alumni from 2014/15 to 2025/26 who completed the survey overwhelmingly said their fellowship helped **develop their workplace skills, deepen their knowledge of community resilience, and provide a pathway into the workforce.**

CivicSpark Alumni feel strongly that their fellowship provided them with needed skills for their career, improved communication, and increased their confidence (n=202)



77% of Alumni AGREED or STRONGLY AGREED that their CivicSpark fellowship provided a pathway into the workforce.

95% of CivicSpark Alumni who responded said their fellowship furthered their professional goals.



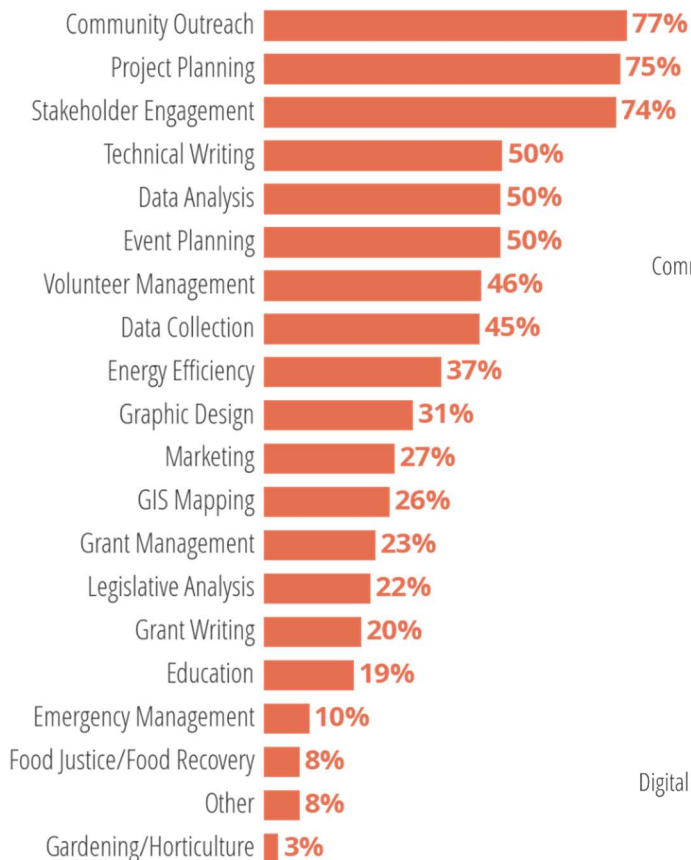
The majority of Alumni who participated in the survey said serving as a Fellow with CivicSpark furthered their goals, professionally, personally, and/or in their education.



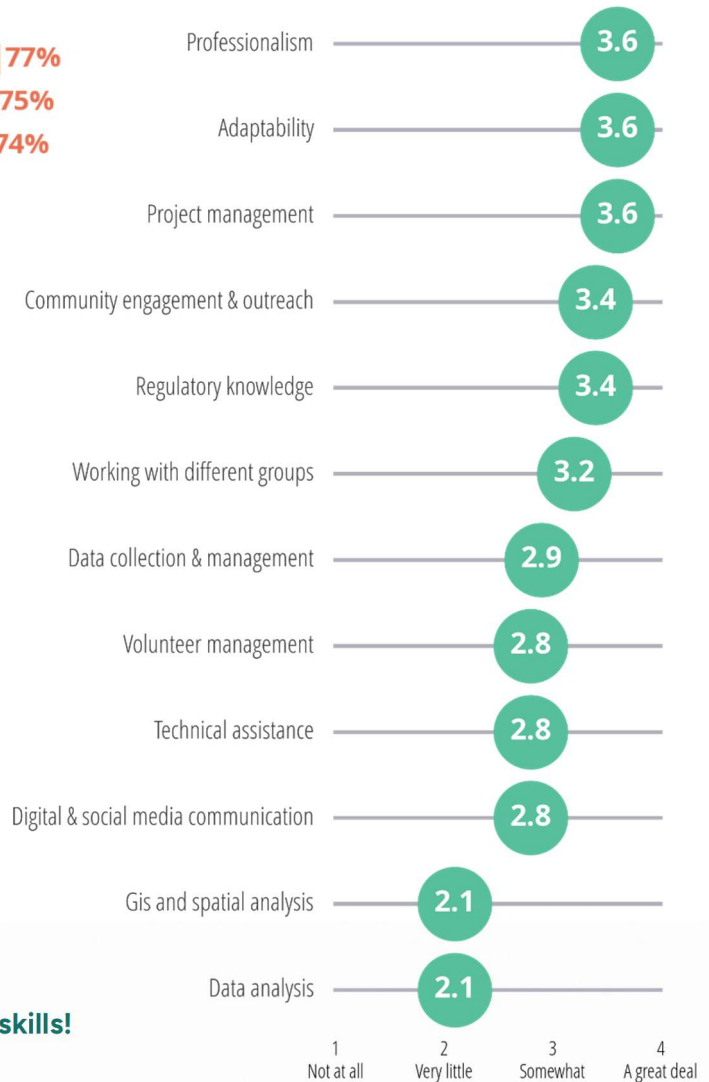
Skills Utilization

Throughout the course of their fellowship, Alumni said they were able to develop critical skills for their current role, as well as to aid future employment opportunities. Alumni felt their skill development increased 'a great deal' during their fellowship.

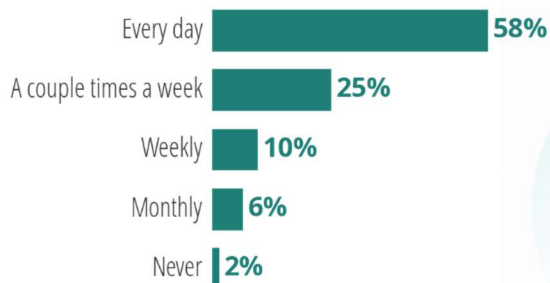
Alumni developed skills in community outreach, engaging stakeholders, project planning, and data analysis. (n=201)



Alumni felt their fellowship increased their professionalism, adaptability, and project management skills.



98% of Alumni participants still utilize these skills!



Where are they now?

Alumni reported at some point working in the community resilience field, and many still do. The connections built during their fellowship service were crucial for their future endeavors.



85%

Reported currently working or studying in a field that involves community resilience.



69%

Reported at some point working in or advancing their education in community resilience.



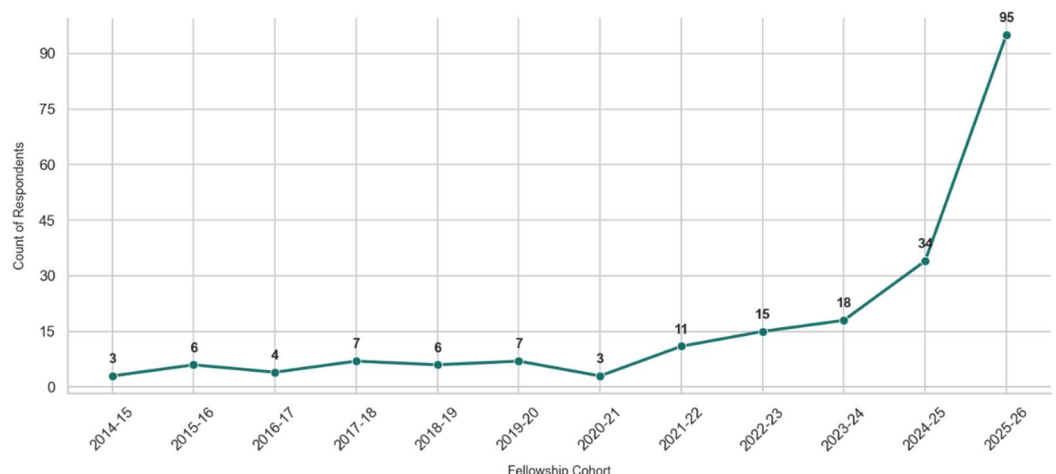
29%

Reported getting a job in, or directly connected to, the organization or agency in which they served while completing CivicSpark.

Alumni work in energy, community resilience, transportation, and urban planning.



Alumni from 2014/15 to the most recent Fellow cohort (2025/26) provided feedback on their fellowship experience. A majority of respondents were Fellows after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Summary of findings

Fellows felt their experience with CivicSpark helped to further their professional and personal goals. They also gained valuable skills and experience that propelled them into many career paths where they could use their knowledge of community resilience. Alumni said their fellowship:

- **Increased confidence in their career path**
- **Improved their communication skills**
- **Provided the necessary skills to move forward on their career path**

Impressively, **95% of Alumni** who participated said the fellowship **furthered their professional goals** and developed their **professionalism, adaptability, and project management** skills, all crucial to their career development. Almost all (**98%**) **still utilize these skills, and 58% said they use them every day**. Alumni most frequently reported working in fields such as:

- Energy
- Community Resilience
- Transportation/Mobility
- Urban or Rural Planning

Perhaps most important were the connections made during their fellowship. Many Alumni accepted the opportunity to continue working with their partner organization after their time with CivicSpark. **Nearly one-third (31%) reported staying with their site organization after their fellowship ended.**

Alumni Feedback

Although placements varied widely over the 10+ years, Alumni shared common experiences and described similar impacts of their time as Fellows.

Meaningful Contributions

Alumni shared their most meaningful contributions to their host organization or their community. Many alumni shared their most meaningful contribution was their ability to **increase their host organization's capacity in the community, create durable organizational systems, tools, and processes, and to support community outreach and development work.**



Understanding of Community Resilience

Alumni shared their understanding that community resilience is **a systemic-level effort to build sustainable capacity building to adapt to and recover from adversity**. They found that infrastructure development and community-wide education can successfully support building community resilience.

Challenges & How they Navigated Them

Alumni reported facing challenges, including **unclear role expectations, partner staff support capacity issues, and cost of living obstacles**. As Fellows, they overcame these issues through **communication, advocating for themselves, leaning on CivicSpark regional staff, and relying on other fellowship cohort members**.

Future CivicSpark Supports

Alumni suggested that CivicSpark could support future Fellows and the Alumni network by **increasing visibility** of job postings and employer connections, **increasing career development support** earlier in their service term, **facilitating regional or sector-specific networking opportunities**, and further supporting Fellows who are **navigating housing and workplace challenges**.

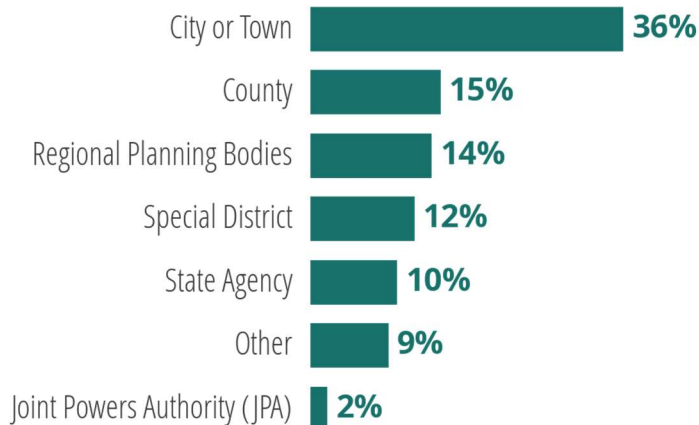


“[Community resilience] was very eye-opening -- it helped me understand that working with the community calls for consistency, patience, trust, and empathy. My personal goal became secondary once I found a goal/mission that aligned with my values.”

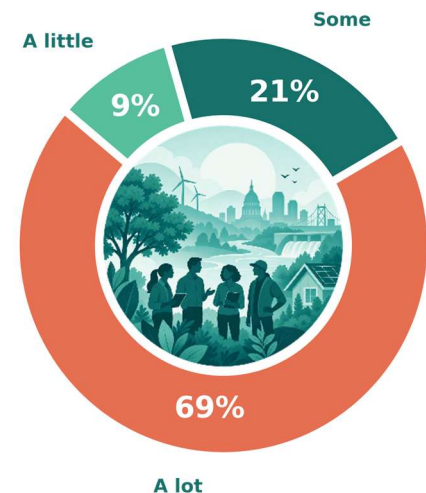
— Alum, 2024-25

Partner Survey Summary

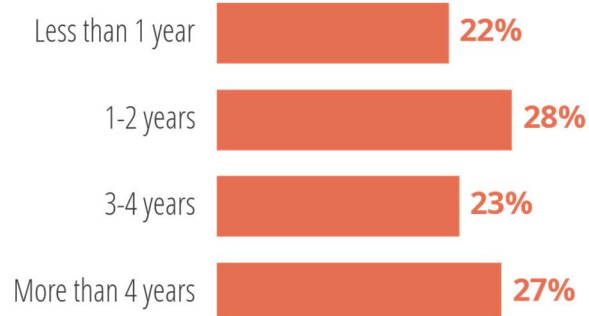
CivicSpark 2025/26 Partners represented a wide variety of jurisdictions, from cities and towns to counties, regional planning bodies, special districts, and state agencies. (n=97)



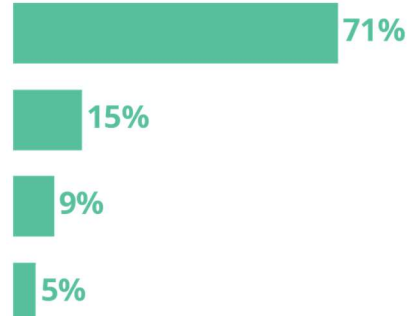
All Partner organizations had at least some experience working in the specific community resilience area of their Fellow's project.



How long has this project existed within your agency?



How long has a CivicSpark Fellow(s) been working on this project with you?

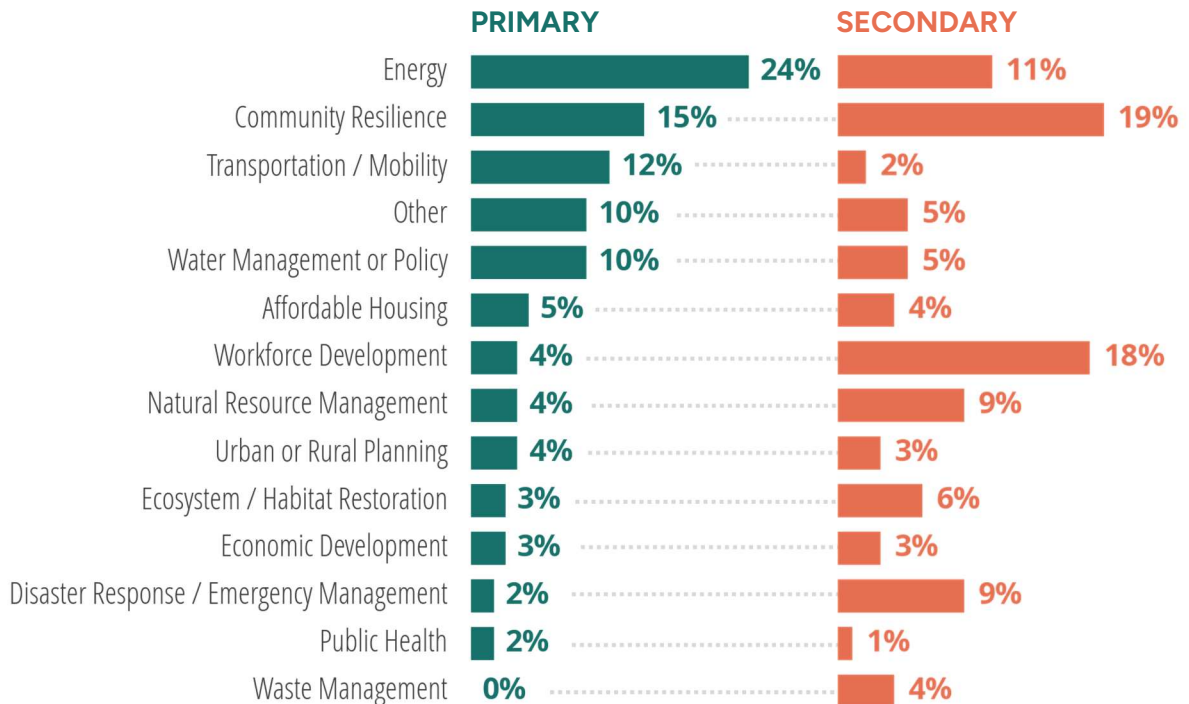


CivicSpark Fellows provided additional capacity and fresh energy to their sites, in some cases supporting long-term projects that may have stalled or paused due to a lack of internal capacity. Over three-quarters of projects (78%) were ongoing initiatives, but less than one-third (29%) had engaged a CivicSpark Fellow on the project for more than one year.



On average, Partners report 61% of their time at work in the last 12 months was spent on the specific resiliency area the Fellow's project focused on.

What is the primary/secondary resiliency issue that your project addressed?



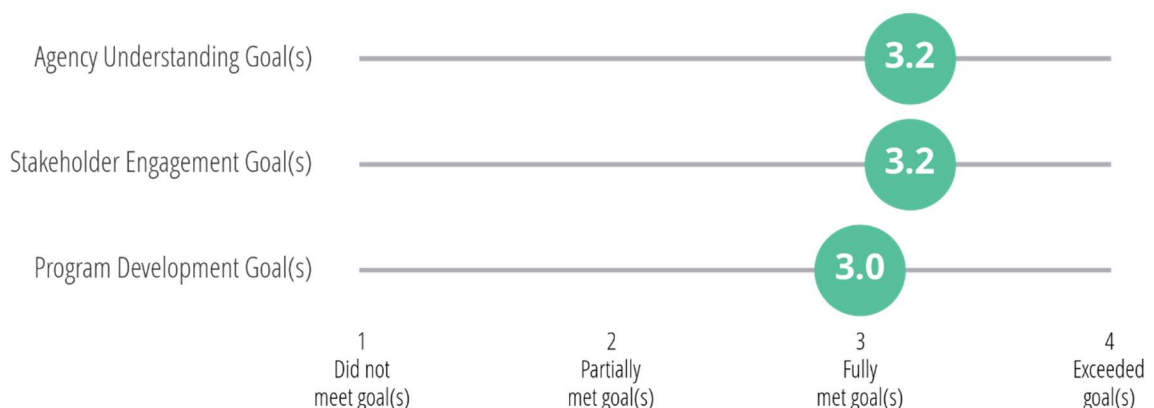
Most projects were primarily (53%) or secondarily (32%) focused on energy, community resilience, or transportation. Partners view CivicSpark fellowships powerful professional development and mentoring opportunities; 18% of Partners described “Workforce Development” as the secondary issue addressed through their Fellow’s project.

Fellows’ activities supported multiple aspects of their project, including data, outreach, training, and coordination.

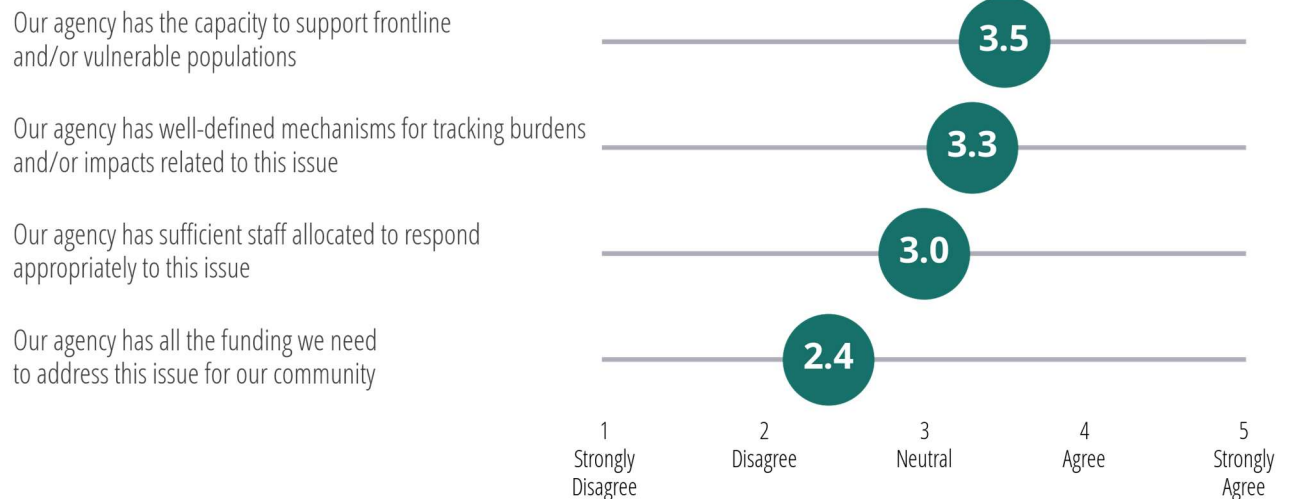
The variety of experience depends on Fellow skills and interests, the project, and needs of the host site agency.



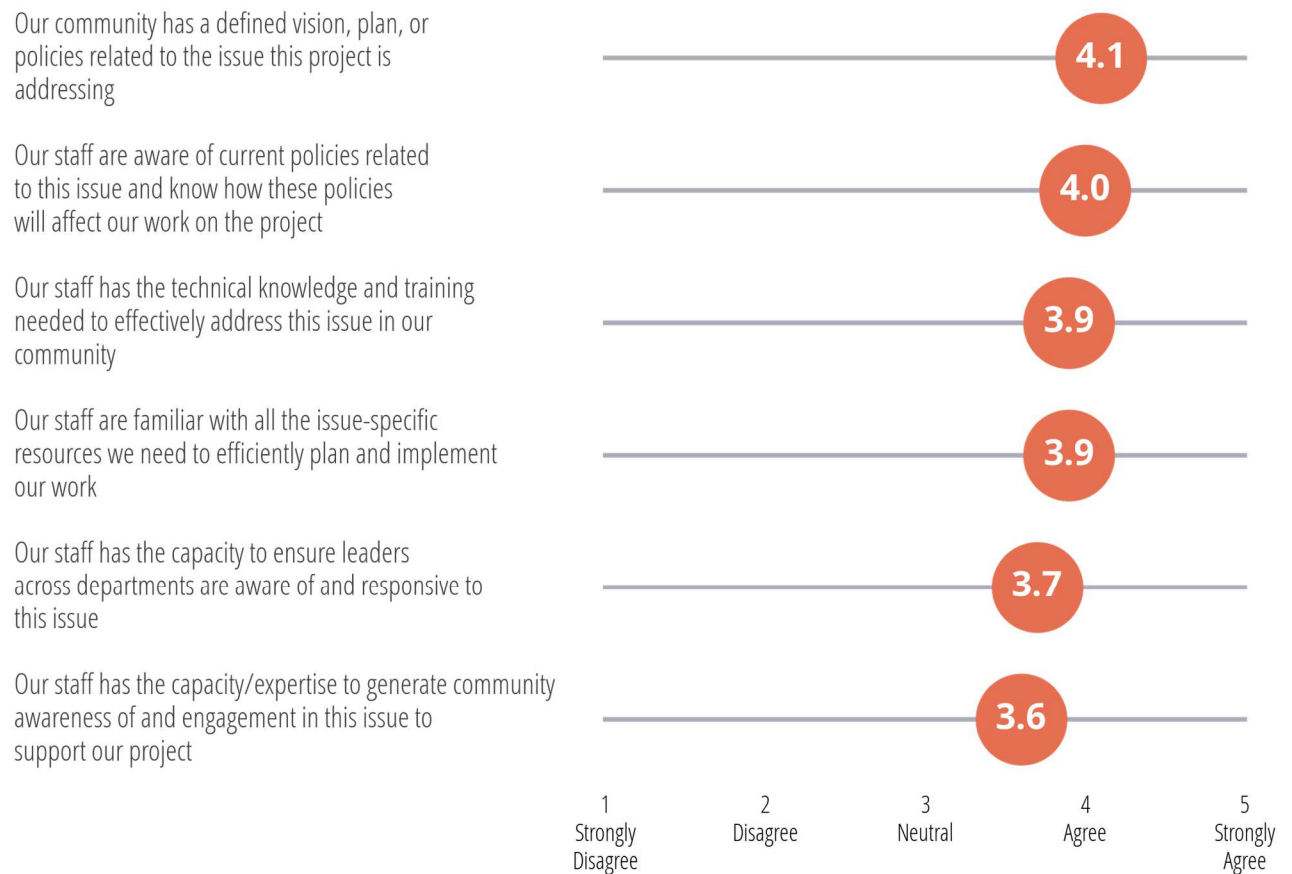
On average, Partners met, and in some cases, exceeded their goals.



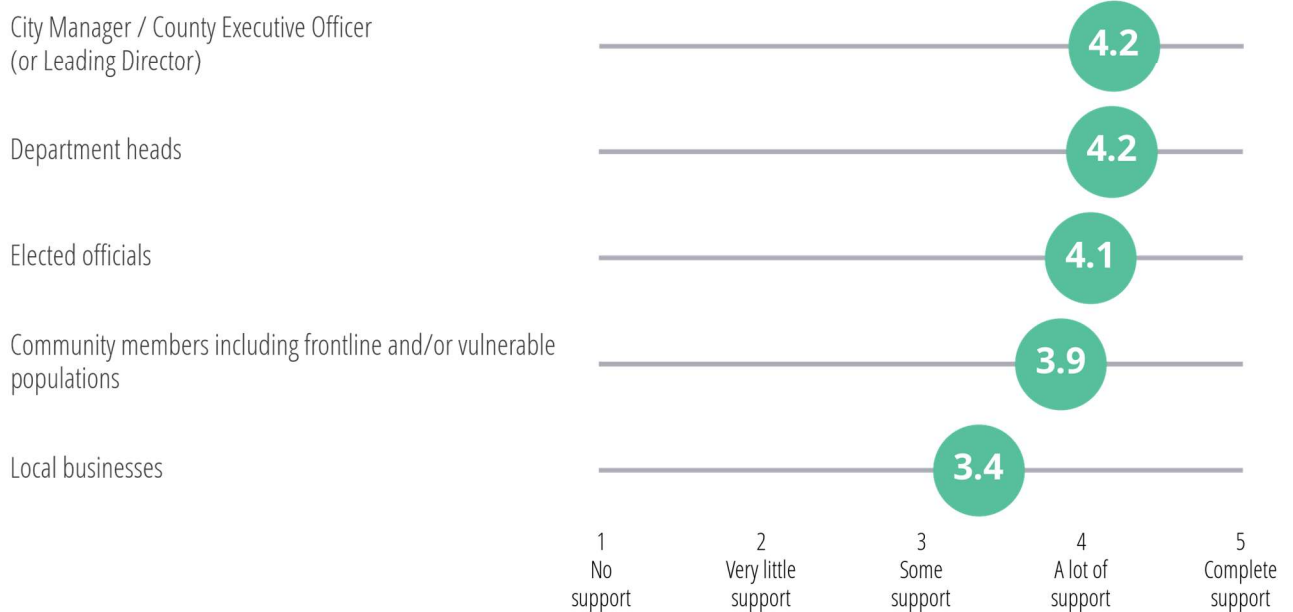
Partners reported ongoing needs for additional agency capacity, tracking mechanisms, and staffing to address their topic, highlighting the need for additional funding.



Partners report community members and staff as having greater capacity, on average, than agencies overall. While communities have strong visions, more capacity is needed to increase awareness of and engagement with their project's topic.

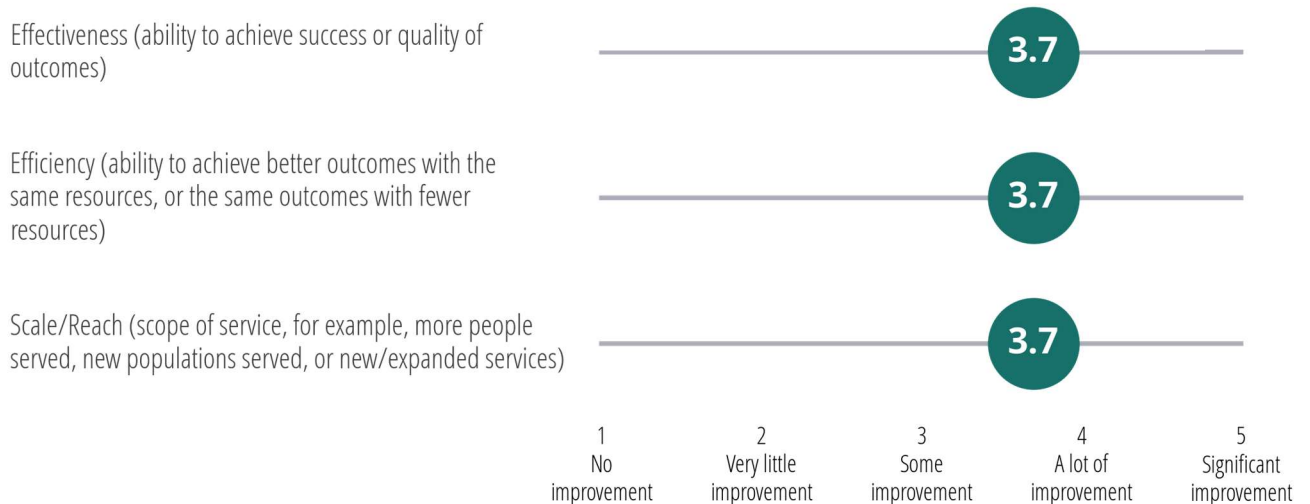


Partners report the highest level of support from agency leadership, followed by elected officials and community members. The lowest support comes from local businesses.



Partner agencies work in collaboration with many local, regional, and statewide agencies in their work, and most experience 'a lot' of support from their local leadership, within agency and elected. Further engagement with local businesses may help increase the support agencies receive with their projects, perhaps strengthening public/private collaboration.

All Partners reported improved capacity in their ability to achieve success, operate with greater efficiency, and provide new services or reach new communities.



CivicSpark Fellows increased capacity to complete important work, improve efficiency, and advance projects that might otherwise have been delayed or left incomplete. Partners described stronger systems that improved effectiveness, while enhanced outreach and engagement helped agencies reach more residents, communities, and partners.

Summary of findings

Partner feedback shows that **CivicSpark Fellows are a catalyst** for agencies working to advance community resilience. Partners described dedicated teammates who add staff capacity, move important projects forward, expand outreach and stakeholder reach, and create robust tools, systems, and processes.

Overall, **84% of Partners indicated that their goals were met or exceeded** across three domains: Stakeholder Engagement (90%), Agency Understanding (89%), and Program Development (76%). Partners also reported meaningful gains in organizational capacity, especially having a defined community vision, plan, or policy and staff awareness of relevant policies, and technical knowledge and training. **All Partners (100%) reported increased capacity.**

Partner Feedback

Although partner agencies varied in size, geography, and focus, they consistently described CivicSpark as a **responsive and well-organized** program that brings **fresh energy, practical skills, and meaningful capacity** to complex work Partners valued Fellows' ability to work independently while collaborating with agency staff, adapt to changing needs, and contribute to projects that might otherwise be delayed or not completed. Several partners reported no needed improvements and praised the CivicSpark team's responsiveness, organization, and support.

Meaningful Contributions

Partners identified meaningful contributions made by the Fellows, especially valuing the lasting nature of the work. Fellows left behind **clearer processes, accessible data, practical tools, and stronger organizational knowledge**. They expanded an agency's ability to engage community members, businesses, elected officials, and other partners, helping organizations reach audiences and build relationships that staff capacity alone may not have supported. For small agencies and nonprofit organizations, Fellows reduced the administrative burden of hiring and onboarding while providing a dedicated teammate who could make lasting contributions during their service year.

Understanding of Community Resilience

Partners described community resilience as **the ability of communities and institutions to prepare for, respond to, and recover from challenges while building sustainable systems for the future.**



Their responses emphasized that resilience depends on coordinated planning, strong relationships, equitable engagement, reliable infrastructure, organizational capacity, and the ability to turn information into action. Work in energy, community resilience, planning, water, transportation, and natural resources **connected research and education with implementation**. Fellows helped agencies translate community needs and technical information into plans, policies, programs, and outreach that can support long-term resilience.

Challenges & How they Navigated Them

Partners' most recurring challenges involved limited internal staff time and funding, changing organizational priorities, external delays, and the complexity of advancing long-term projects within a one-year fellowship. Partners navigated these challenges through **regular communication, project adjustments, and clear prioritization of deliverables**. Earlier alignment on expectations, milestones, communication practices, and available capacity could make placements even more effective.

Future CivicSpark Supports

In addition to clear communication about Partner expectations and Fellow capacity, Partners requested stronger onboarding and workload alignment to establish realistic priorities early. Overall, the Partners' feedback points to CivicSpark **as a strong program that could deepen its impact by making planning and communication even more explicit while continuing to support Fellows' professional growth and technical learning**.



“Since 2020, CivicSpark Fellows have been a valuable extension of [our] team. They have expanded our capacity across long-range planning, public engagement, data services, and technical assistance, helping us tackle critical projects while bringing fresh energy, new ideas, and a strong commitment to public service.”

- Partner organization

CivicSpark Fellow Experiences

Reflections from 2025-2026

Key Reflections

- Fellows built confidence, professional, technical, and communication skills, while gaining career clarity and stronger professional networks.
- Site Supervisor mentorship and ownership of meaningful work were central to Fellow growth and success.
- Fellows added substantial capacity through research, data analysis, outreach, educational materials, coordination, and community engagement.
- Fellows recommended earlier placement-specific training, clearer expectations and communications, stronger cohort and staff connection, and more financial support.

Background

The CivicSpark evaluator interviewed five Fellows across three states (California, Washington, and Colorado) in August 2026 to learn more about their experiences working with their partner organization. Fellows entered CivicSpark with a variety of career interests, hoping to utilize this opportunity to get their foot in the door or to learn in a more hands-on environment about their chosen career path. CivicSpark provided Fellows with an opportunity to develop their professional skills, network with professionals in their field, receive mentorship from Site Supervisors and gain exposure to a variety of field experiences.

Fellows developed in several ways throughout their service term. First, they developed confidence, professional skills (e.g., public speaking, and leadership), and technical skills (e.g., GIS and data analysis), as well as gained career clarity. Second, the Fellows provided their site organizations with much-needed added capacity to accomplish project goals and organizational missions. Finally, Fellows emphatically discussed the importance of their supervisor to their development through mentorship and ownership of consequential work.

"I would say the greatest thing I've gained is my confidence in my own work."

– CivicSpark Fellow



Fellow Experiences

Mentorship, Support, and Connection

The most consistent response from Fellows during their interviews was how important their **relationship with their Site Supervisors** was to their development. Several Fellows reported their Site Supervisors were their mentors, and they provided **supportive partnership to aid in their professional development**. Some Fellows mentioned that they would have liked more connection with CivicSpark Fellows from their cohort to share advice and experiences. Several Fellows also reported the importance of feeling connected to their host organization during their fellowship in order to grow professionally. A few Fellows suggested increasing opportunities for interaction with CivicSpark staff during their fellowship.

Professional Growth

The most prominent personal outcome for Fellows over their service term was gaining **professional confidence**. Fellows discussed becoming more comfortable making decisions, communicating with partner agencies, the community, and other important stakeholders, presenting to diverse audiences, and writing for various audiences. Additionally, they discussed how much stronger their **technical skills** became during their fellowship (e.g., they became proficient in GIS mapping or data analysis). Finally, they felt their fellowship fostered important professional connections, prepared them for their next professional steps (i.e., beyond their fellowship), and helped them hone their time management skills.



[The document was] “20-something pages and prior to me starting [my Site Supervisor] said that had been something that she had been talking about completing for well over a year and I was able to get it done.”

– CivicSpark Fellow

Long Term Impact

Across the interviews, Fellows shared that they provided their partner organizations with **added capacity** to reach their project goals and organizational missions. Depending on their placement, Fellows conducted research and data analysis, supported outreach and tabling events, developed educational materials, and coordinated with partner organizations. Several Fellows also helped bridge communication between organizational departments or agencies, and some helped support continuity from prior fellowship cohorts. Where applicable, Fellows' educational and outreach materials supported public education, health, safety, conservation, or resource access in their communities. Some Fellows also noted that certain impacts of their work were expected to **continue beyond the fellowship** or had not been fully observed by the end of their term.

Fellow Impact

Fellows shared that one of the biggest benefits they provided their site organizations was their ability to coordinate among multiple agencies and stakeholders to help their communities achieve the best possible outcomes. Several Fellows also **increased their site organization's reach**, helping ensure their site organizations connected more community members with needed resources. Many Fellows also helped improve communication with stakeholders and strengthen community engagement.



Opportunities to Enhance the Fellowship Experience

Program Recommendations

The Fellowship experience was a tremendous success for those who participated in these interviews. **All interviewed Fellows said they would recommend the CivicSpark program to others**, though one recommendation was qualified by concerns about affordability. Several Fellows also offered suggestions for improving the program.

Challenges reported by Fellows were generally manageable and were typically addressed with support from Site Supervisors or colleagues, or through clearer communication. Some Fellows felt their site expectations were ambiguous at first. Given the finite length of their fellowship (i.e., about 11 months) and their dependence on the timelines of other departments, some Fellows also felt disconnected from their site organization's broader mission, uncertain about competing priorities, or concerned about leaving projects incomplete when their fellowship ended. A few Fellows also described feeling isolated due to geographic distance from other Fellows or limited contact with CivicSpark staff.

Several Fellows suggested that earlier training opportunities, especially training tailored to their specific placement, would have benefitted their success in their fellowship. Fellows acknowledged, however, that designing training suited to each varied placement could be difficult.

Finally, one Fellow described the application timeline, site routing and matching process, and early communications as rushed or confusing, particularly when trying to secure a placement in a specific state or region.

"...I feel like CivicSpark overall really confirmed that I enjoyed...working with these local governments and community partners."

– CivicSpark Fellow

Molding The Future of CivicSpark Fellows

Future Aspirations

Fellows were asked about long-term plans and whether participating in the CivicSpark fellowship altered their career plans. Fellows discussed the desire to further their education, pursue an additional fellowship year, and continue working in public service, community, and environmental fields. Most Fellows said that their **CivicSpark experience reinforced or clarified their existing**



career direction. One Fellow described moving away from a desk-centered GIS path toward a more hands-on, community- or nonprofit-focused work, while others said the fellowship helped them refine their preferred planning or public-service roles.

Summary

Overall, **Fellows reflected positively on their experiences at their partner sites and with the CivicSpark program.** They felt participating in the fellowship experience provided them with a strong professional foundation, built their confidence, and enhanced their skills. Fellows believe this opportunity got their foot in the door for their future in this field (i.e., public service). A recurring accomplishment across interviews was the **added capacity** and **concrete deliverables** Fellows provided their site organizations. Individual Fellows also cited **specific accomplishments** such as outreach efforts, educational materials, events they organized, and research they conducted.

Fellows identified opportunities for CivicSpark to enhance future fellowship experiences, including strengthening site-Fellow alignment from the outset to the placement process and fellowship-specific training. CivicSpark could also explore ways to build meaningful connections among Fellows who are geographically dispersed across the program. Finally, expanding financial support for Fellows would help them focus more fully on their fellowship and continue growing professionally.



CivicSpark Partner Agency Experiences

Reflections from 2025-2026

Key Takeaways

- All Site Supervisors reported meaningful gains in organizational capacity, including stronger outreach, stakeholder engagement, processes, evaluation, and institutional knowledge.
- Fellows grew in leadership, technical and research skills, facilitation, independence, and advocacy, while also expanding partner agency expertise.
- The CivicSpark model was viewed as a mutually beneficial partnership, with durable tools, process, and knowledge extending beyond service terms.
- Partners recommended clearer communications and timelines, earlier onboarding, more fellowship-specific training, stronger CivicSpark connection, and greater transparency in candidate offer decisions.

Background

The CivicSpark evaluator interviewed five Site Supervisors from five different partner organizations in California, Washington, and Colorado in August 2026 to learn more about their experiences working with CivicSpark Fellows. The goal of CivicSpark fellowships is to connect site organizations with young professionals who can increase organizational capacity while being mentored during their service term. A common theme emerged across all interviews: **Site Supervisors unanimously felt their organizations' capacity benefited greatly from hosting CivicSpark Fellows.**



Additionally, Site Supervisors and their organizations viewed their roles as an opportunity not only to push projects forward but also to encourage their Fellows to be leaders, take on new projects of interest, and ensure their Fellows felt supported through mentorship.

"It's a partnership. It's not just you helping us out; it's vice versa. We're helping each other out. I learn a lot through my fellows, and it helps me become a better person and better professional. It's always an opportunity to help teach others and to also grow in the same manner."

– CivicSpark Site Supervisor

Partner Experiences

Organizational Capacity, Growth, and Impact

All partners mentioned how much additional capacity they gained by having at least one Fellow. The biggest takeaway from these interviews was how often Site Supervisors from partner organizations mentioned the importance of their Fellows increasing their capacity to reach the community, engage with stakeholders, develop and maintain new organizational processes, grow the organization, increase evaluation capacity, and increase organizational knowledge. They also said their organizations were more prepared to interact with the community at events, educate their clients, engage with the community directly and with their various stakeholders. One Site Supervisor specifically connected this improved readiness to **increased trust from the community**.



"We would probably only be able to do three or four tabling [events]. And the past couple summers, including this summer, we're going to end up doing 12 different tabling sessions. With the Fellow, we're able to actually talk to our community and be visible, tell them about our programs, and allow them to ask questions. I think it helps us to build public trust and reach adults and renters that we may not always get to talk to."

– CivicSpark Site Supervisor

Professional Growth

During the interviews, Site Supervisors were asked how their organization benefited from having their Fellow in terms of program development, technical skills, and goal achievement. Site Supervisors were emphatic about their Fellows' impact, describing their Fellows as **adaptable** and noting that **Fellows built their own subject matter expertise** while also helping the organization grow in its subject matter expertise. Finally, they discussed the growth they saw from their Fellows from the beginning of the service term to the end. Fellows grew in their leadership skills, technical and research skills, outreach and facilitation abilities, and their capacity to work independently, as well as their ability to advocate for themselves, their community, and their stakeholders. One Site Supervisor recommended that CivicSpark provide standard training in professional communication, including Zoom, phone, e-mail etiquette, on camera presence, and meeting facilitation, to further support Fellows' professional growth.

Challenges, Barriers, and Supports

Site Supervisors were also asked to discuss any challenges they faced while participating in the CivicSpark Fellowship program. Those challenges could be with their Fellow or if there was something they wished was different in their interactions with CivicSpark. Several Site Supervisors reported no major challenges with their Fellow or the program's structure. Others, however, described specific challenges, including navigating public-sector approval processes and government bureaucracy, adjusting to evolving goals and public-agency timelines, and finding time for onboarding and mentorship. Additional feedback included the need for more training in professional communication, constraints related to candidate recruitment and offer-consideration process, unclear or diffuse program communications, and requests for more involvement and connection from CivicSpark staff.

"The CivicSpark Fellow position allows us to pilot things or try things out for the first time, get information in the door, and explore or research topics that staff may not have the capacity to spend time doing. ...We've now had two years of that, and we're excited to have the ball rolling. Now that capacity has been built, it's easier for us to make budget asks for staff positions that can take those projects on in a more long-term, sustained way."

– CivicSpark Site Supervisor

Site Supervisors at more remote or geographically separated sites also described wanting to **strengthen their Fellows' connections with their cohort** and with CivicSpark staff, including through more in-person contact. One Site Supervisor suggested that CivicSpark staff visit in person, such as taking Fellows out to lunch, to help build rapport and provide support. Another Site Supervisor elaborated on the challenge of **evolving goals**, noting that as their Fellow's goals shifted from the beginning to the end of the term, they needed more time to help the Fellow identify a doable goal and work through the organizational context.

Opportunities to Enhance the Partner Fellowship Experience

Program Recommendations

Site Supervisors provided recommendations for enhancing the CivicSpark program and the Fellow experience. Several recommended changes to the candidate consideration process, specifically how much information Fellows can see when deciding where to complete their fellowship. Rather than seeing one offer at a time without knowing whether other offers exist, Site Supervisors felt that **Fellows with multiple offers should be able to see all of them** and decide with that full context. As it currently stands, Fellows risk turning down an offer without knowing whether another offer is coming, or whether an existing offer would better fit their career aspirations. Other feedback included creating more fellowship-specific training materials, hosting more in-person trainings and cohort connection opportunities, and consolidating and clarifying email and program communications, including timelines and requirements. Another point of emphasis was on providing clearer expectations and earlier onboarding and mentorship guidance for host sites and Fellows at the start of the service term. Finally, Site Supervisors emphasized the importance of strengthening the connection among CivicSpark staff, Site Supervisors, and Fellows, noting that maintaining this connection will help the program in the future.

Molding the Future of CivicSpark Fellowships

Site Supervisors and Future CivicSpark Partner Suggestions

All Site Supervisors interviewed said they would recommend CivicSpark to other organizations.

They also took the opportunity to offer their advice to those who might be interested in a partnership with CivicSpark. One Site Supervisor valued having a Fellow with **strong local or regional familiarity**, noting that it aided the Fellow's ability to expand organizational capacity.



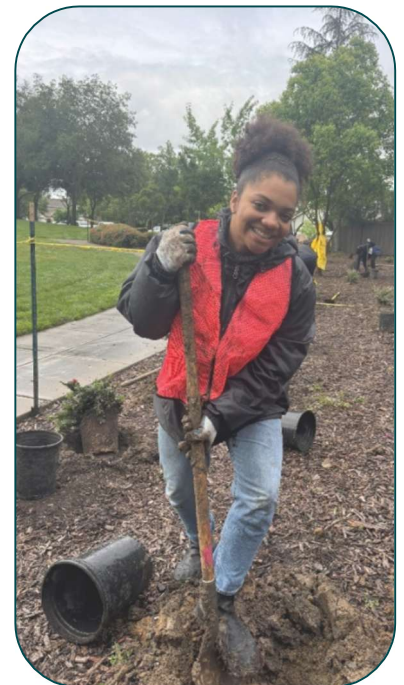
Other Site Supervisors described the need to help Fellows who are less familiar with a region or state build **contextual knowledge** and suggested that CivicSpark provide training and resources to these Fellows at or before the start of their fellowship.

Another thing Site Supervisors mentioned is the importance of making sure they understand the **time commitment** being made. A Fellow requires the host site to foster the Fellow's growth, and that should not be taken lightly. Additionally, they said CivicSpark is a great workforce development opportunity to mentor young professionals in a cost-effective manner. Finally, they discussed how the mentorship is also a partnership, and that they learned just as much from their Fellow as the Fellow learned from them.

Summary

Overall, Site Supervisors described **a thriving and positive relationship with CivicSpark and their Fellows**. Many have hosted site supervisors across multiple terms, and some have supervised more than one Fellow. All interviewees said they would recommend, or already had recommended, the program to other agencies. Upon reflection, Site Supervisors said that **the CivicSpark model is a mutually beneficial mentorship/partnership for themselves, their organizations, and their Fellows**. Fellows gain the necessary professional skills and experience, and as they gain the confidence to do the work, they become more independent in their outreach, program development, research, analysis, and technical skills.

Partner agencies and Site Supervisors gained the organizational capacity needed to do their work and complete project goals in a cost-efficient manner, all while developing the next generation of the workforce. Importantly, interviewees identified durable processes, tools, and institutional knowledge that help sustain the work after the service term ends. Site Supervisors generally expected the impact of their Fellows to continue beyond the service term, whether through documented tools and programs, increased institutional knowledge, hosting future Fellows, or, for some sites, continued service from their current Fellow. As the agencies and their Fellows continue to grow in their own capacities, the CivicSpark model will continue to thrive through service-learning and professional development.



Conclusion

Across the 2014-2026 Alumni Survey, 2025-26 Partner Survey, and 2025-26 Experience Reflections, CivicSpark continues to be a mutually beneficial workforce and community-resilience model. This final evaluation report addressed the project's six research questions:

1. Which aspects of CivicSpark are most valuable to partner agencies?

A dedicated Fellow who owns meaningful work, supported by Site Supervisors and agency staff. Fellows advanced outreach, engagement, planning, research, data, and durable tools, filling in gaps. These contributions addressed work that agencies often lacked the time or capacity to complete.

2. Which aspects most contribute to partner outcomes?

Outcomes were strongest when Fellows worked independently while staying connected to agency staff and translated community needs or technical information into usable plans, programs, communications, and resources. A majority of responding partners (84%) said their goals were "met or exceeded," with the strongest results in stakeholder engagement and agency understanding. Almost all responding Partners reported increased capacity in effectiveness (100%), efficiency (99%), and scale/reach (99%).

3. What changes could better support partner outcomes?

Reinforce clearer expectations, milestones, communication norms, and workload boundaries before service begins. Earlier onboarding and mentorship, plus tools for reprioritizing when timelines or approvals shift, could further strengthen alignment and continuity.

4. Which aspects are most valuable to Fellows?

Mentorship, ownership of consequential work, hands-on technical and professional learning, and relationships that clarify career direction. Fellows also reported stronger



confidence, communication and project-management skills, networks, and greater clarity about next steps.

5. What are Fellows' career-related outcomes after completing the program?

CivicSpark is a pathway into public service and community-resilience work: 95% of Alumni said the fellowship furthered their professional goals, 77% saw it as a workforce pathway, 85% now work or study in a related field, and 29% obtained work directly connected to their host organization.

6. What changes could enhance Fellows' career-related outcomes? Begin career development earlier by increasing job visibility and employer connections, regional networking, placement-specific and professional-communication training, stronger Fellow and CivicSpark connections, transparent placement and offer processes, and offering additional financial support.

Overall, findings highlight a strong core model, with opportunities for small improvements. Preserving Fellowship ownership, meaningful project work, and supportive relationships while strengthening expectations, communication, career development, and transition support can deepen already strong partner impact and longer-term Fellow outcomes.

