



Skills for Cities Spring 2023 Impact Report

Bringing the Power of
Pro Bono to Texas

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Texas is a thriving hub for nonprofit innovators, social entrepreneurs, and community builders working towards social equity. As the demand for community services continues to increase, so does the need for greater capacity and stronger, more resilient infrastructure for nonprofits to deliver on their missions. On average, nonprofits spend less than 10% on essential infrastructure like finance, human resources, technology, strategy, and marketing, while corporations tend to pay double or even triple this amount.

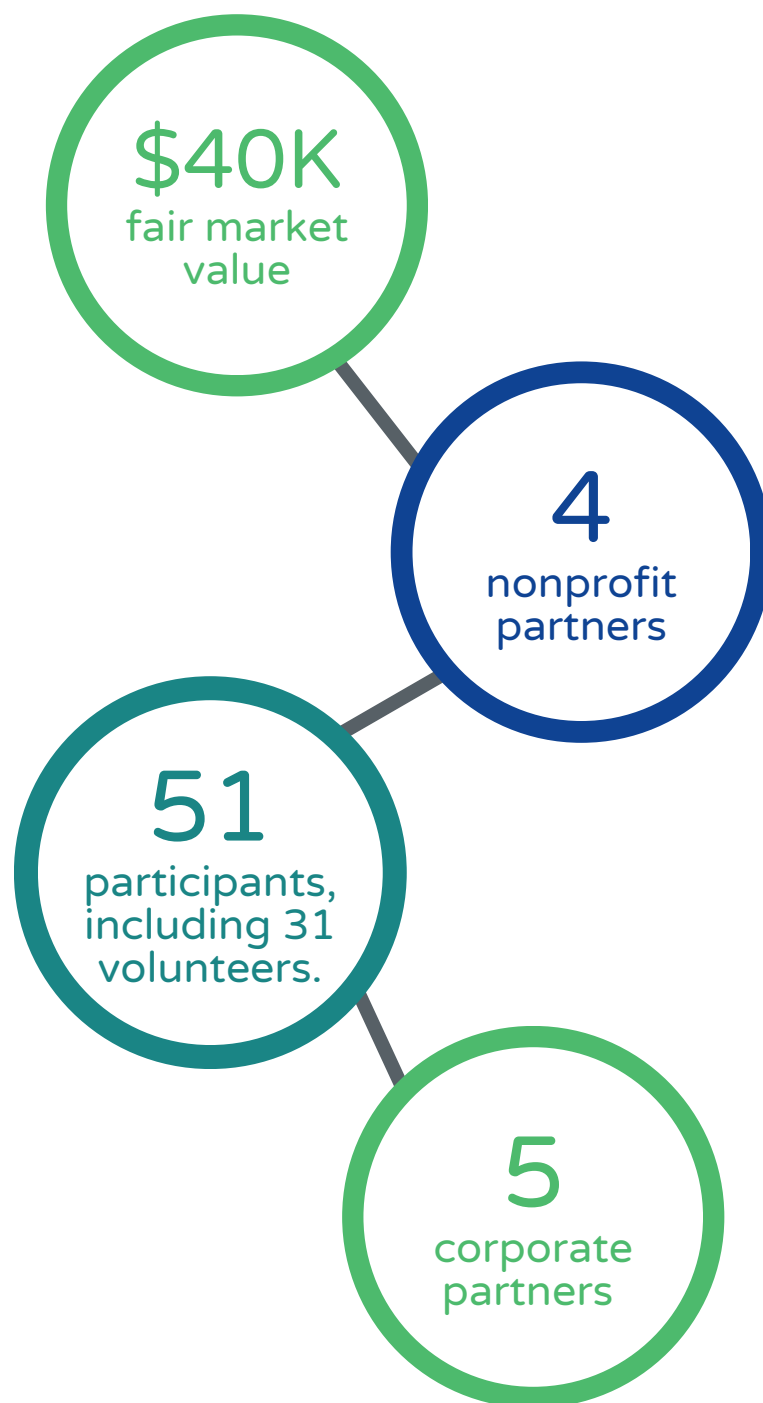
Common Impact's skills-based volunteering event, Skills for Cities, utilized cross-sector collaboration to bring together dozens of skilled volunteers from leading companies and the leaders of several nonprofits across Austin, Houston, and Dallas for an intensive, one-day virtual flash consulting event. The result? Increased capacity, new connections, and fresh perspectives on how to work together to build communities.

Volunteers provided skills-based support for:

- Marketing & Branding
- Human Resources
- Technology
- Operations
- Client Relations & Sales



Impact Snapshot



Volunteer Reflections

“

It is always fascinating to meet people with different skills that came to give their expertise for good. It was a very engaging and thought-provoking experience. I appreciate the opportunity!

Corporate Volunteer

“

I met several people in fields that interest me, allowing me not just to get exposed to their ways of thinking about problems but also to build my professional network.

Devon Nerstad, Ameriprise

Community Conversation

Common Impact hosted [Zion Escobar](#), former Executive Director at Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy, for an insightful discussion on equitable partnerships with Chief Executive Officer [Leila Saad](#). Watch the full presentation and discussion [here](#).

Zion shares how the Houston Freedmen's Town, the city's oldest Black settlement, is undergoing a renewal and requires equitable partnerships for sustained success. The Houston Freedmen's Town Conservancy is paving the way for such partnerships by promoting co-creation and resource sharing beyond monetary means. This talk highlights the significance of the transition from corporate donors to doers and how collaborative efforts can uplift capacity from the community level.

“ Find a local nonprofit advocating for that area and support them. They need sophisticated people to help them get seen and be heard. See where you can help.

– Zion Escobar



“ Common Impact's skills-based volunteering initiatives have helped to build strong cross-sector partnerships and create lasting impacts in communities nationwide.

– Leila Saad



The highlight for me was seeing the dedication the volunteers put into our project. They gave us so much insight and value. I feel really grateful.

— Libbey Sanford, Executive Director
Austin Recovery

Our volunteers delivered! We got help in the two areas we sought help with, and a strategy session that expanded our view and got us thinking differently. This was valuable!

— Austin Recovery Network

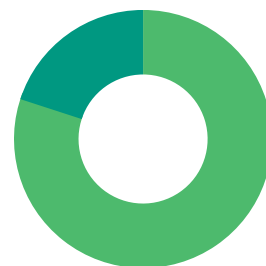
We truly enjoyed meeting new volunteers who were passionate about giving their time to support our mission to serve the most vulnerable members of our community.

— Jennifer Leone
Chief Financial & Administrative Officer
Interfaith Ministries

Nonprofit Impact

100%

of nonprofits agreed or strongly agreed that they will be able to use the project deliverable within the next 12 months



80%

of nonprofits said the event made them think about their approach in a new way.

100%

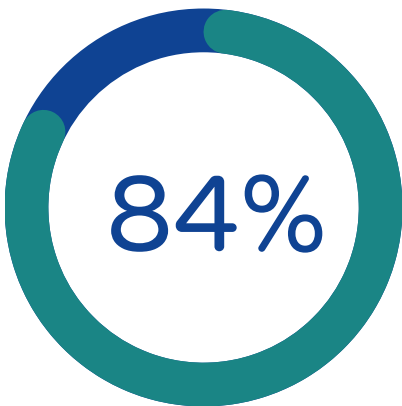
of nonprofits agreed or strongly agreed the volunteer team's skills and expertise matched with my specific project challenge.



Volunteer Impact



agreed or strongly agreed, knowing my company cares about connecting employees to issues of importance in my community makes me more likely to recommend it as a great workplace.



agreed or strongly agreed, as a result of Skills for Cities, their awareness of social justice issues increased.



Agreed that their work at Skills for Cities made a real difference for the nonprofit client.

84% said skills such as leadership, strategic thinking, empathy, and client relations improved.

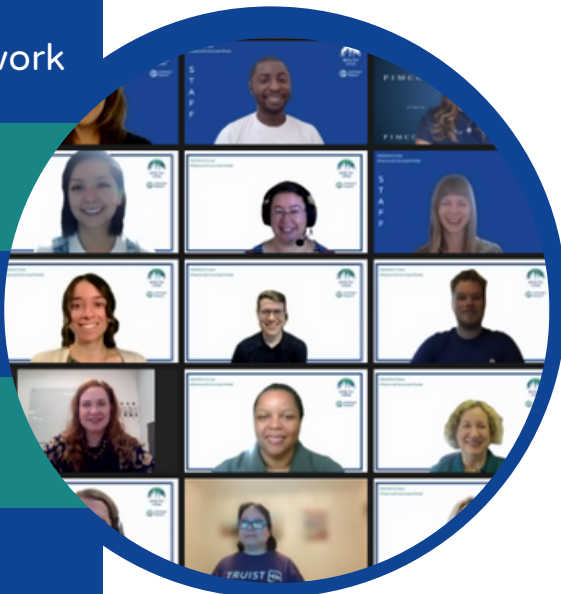
Collaboration & Teamwork

Client Focus & Empathetic Approach

Creative Thinking & Innovation

Problem-Solving & Navigating Ambiguity

Leadership & Strategic Thinking



“ There's nothing like sharing lessons learned from various experiences, histories, and educations. Synthesizing actionable plans with so many ideas is challenging yet rewarding work.

Gabriel Rothman, Senior Product Manager
Wayfair

“ Skills for Cities was an excellent way for me to support a non-profit constructively and meaningfully. Our work will shape how they work for years to come and hopefully increase the impact of the non-profit's efforts. Overall the experience opened my eyes to the type of volunteering work out there and how it could be to work for a non-profit

Lukas Leijon,
Leadership Development Program Associate
Ameriprise Financial

Project Spotlight



The Inclusive Communities Project is a nonprofit organization that promotes affordable and inclusive housing in Dallas-Fort Worth. Their website is critical for reaching their target audience and providing information about their programs and services. However, their website needed to be updated and made easier to navigate.

A cross-company team of Skills for Cities volunteers closely collaborated with the organization to understand their goals, audience, and challenges with their current website. They analyzed the website, identified areas for improvement, and created user-friendly mockups. They compiled and documented design principles and provided the organization with quick and actionable wins, such as updating copy and optimizing images to improve the website's functionality.

The team's thoughtful and practical deliverables empower Inclusive Communities Project's small group to take tangible actions to use their website to its maximum potential.



“We thoroughly enjoyed working with the Skills for Cities corporate volunteers. They understood what we needed and presented us with a blueprint for our website that we could easily follow. We have already implemented some of their recommendations and anticipate completing the project by the end of the year.

Ann Lott
Executive Director



“I thoroughly enjoyed being in community with the corporate volunteers. Their energy, care, and hard work were evident from start to finish. The skills-based expertise allowed us to have our website evaluated and with feedback that we could then take to our web designer. The constructive feedback gave us the language to communicate accurately with our web designer.

Jennifer Rangel
Planning & Community Outreach Director



“The [volunteers] brought enthusiasm and a desire to get it right from the very start of the meeting. They listened to our concerns and gave us a tangible example of what our website could look like if we made the recommended changes. I was pleasantly surprised when our tech team provided us with a stunning website mockup in a relatively short time.

Shamira Lawrence
Mobility and Outreach Director

To all our Skills for Cities partners and participants,

thank you!

We hope you will continue your commitment to support nonprofit organizations using your skills in your own community and beyond.



Want to join us in October for the next Skills for Cities?
[Read more](#) and [reach out today](#).