



skills for
cities



common
impact



Fannie Mae®

Skills for Cities

Fall 2023

Impact Report



Building Pathways to
Healthy Communities
through Cross-Sector
Collaboration

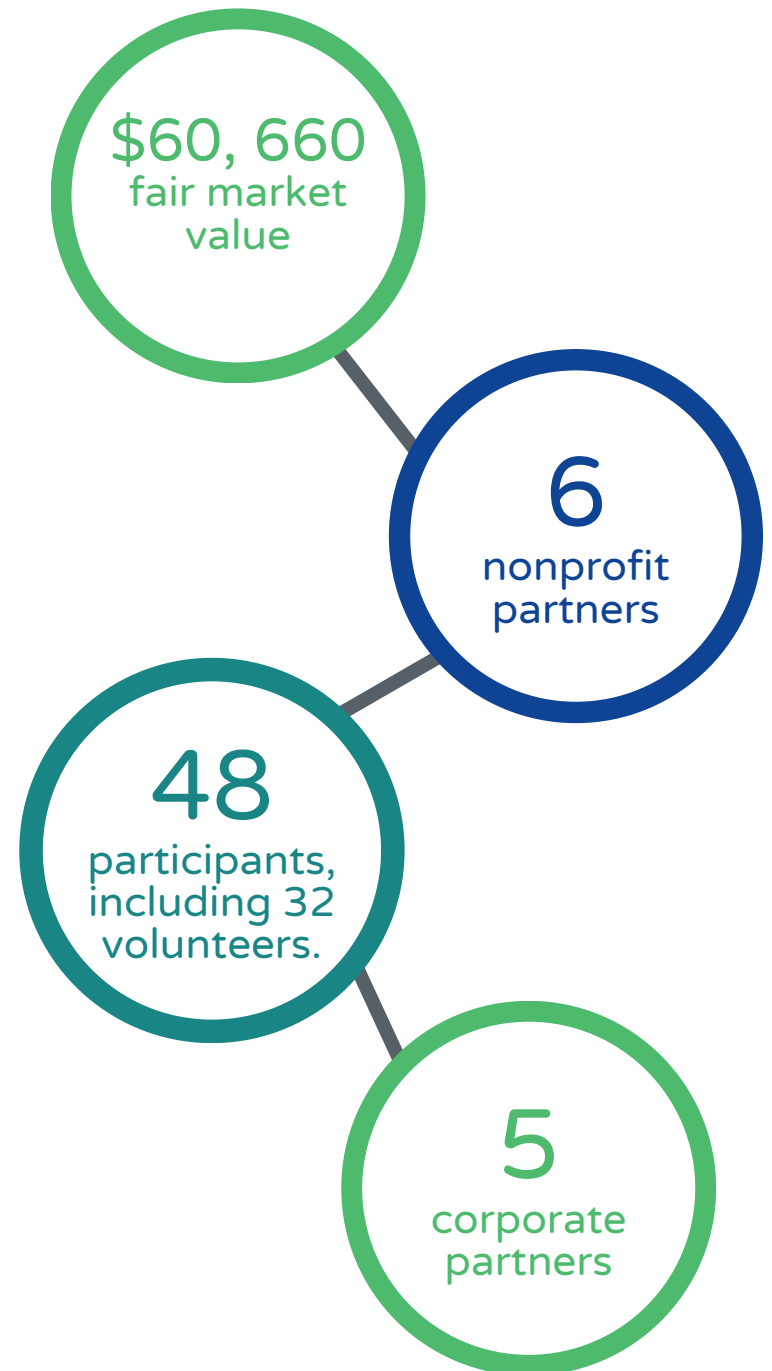




Impact Snapshot

Through Skills for Cities, skilled volunteers and community leaders collaborated to enhance nonprofits' capacity in fostering healthy communities and addressing social determinants of health. Many face health risks and a diminished quality of life due to challenging environments. Access to opportunities empowers individuals to break the cycle of systemic inequity and become catalysts for change.

Recognizing the crucial role nonprofits play, we partnered with our premier sponsor Fannie Mae to assemble cross-company volunteer teams. These teams tackled operational challenges in areas like HR, finance, data analysis, and strategy during our flagship event, Fall 2023 Skills for Cities, supporting nonprofits dedicated to community health.



Volunteers provided skills-based support for:

- Marketing & Communication
- General Management
- Business Development
- Graphic Design
- Audience Engagement
- Public Relations & Media Strategy



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A word from our premier sponsor: Fannie Mae

Families across the US face all of these [adverse health] challenges, particularly if they live in communities that have been overlooked, disinvested in, or cut off from resources for decades.

Fannie Mae is a perfect partner to support an event like this one that highlights the important intersection of housing and health. Our experience and expertise show that safe and secure housing is one of the most important social determinants of good health outcomes. And we also know from our collective experience that this is an equity issue, no doubt about it.

– Maria Evans, Vice President of Community Impact



Community Conversation

Working Together to Make Our Communities Healthy and Strong



Led by Leila Saad, CEO of Common Impact, our Community Conversations delved into impactful discussions featuring three changemakers shaping healthy communities through collaborative efforts between corporations and nonprofits. Catch the replay [here](#).

At the Skills for Cities event, our panelists explored collaborative initiatives aimed at nurturing healthy and equitable communities, underscoring the pivotal role of companies in driving local change. With a spotlight on [Legendary Legacies](#) and [Inner Voice Outer Change](#), the discussion showcased their impactful community-building efforts through strategic partnerships, including skills-based volunteering. The conversation further spotlighted the transformative contributions of [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts \(BCBSMA\)](#) and its employees, showcasing how their skills and flexible support addressed critical nonprofit needs.

[Catch the insightful conversation here.](#)



“

In terms of challenges, we see so many areas of need; there are many opportunities to dig in and do more. Our communities are diverse and need lots of support and resources for mental, emotional, and spiritual health. And it can feel, for a lot of us, really overwhelming. Where I find inspiration and the capacity to keep doing is looking at the strengths of these communities, especially led by brilliant nonprofit leaders like Ron and Isiah, who are doing such incredible work and are the experts around community development, community engagement, and ultimately spearheading community health.

– [Lucy Darragh](#)

Director of Strategy and Social Impact at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts



“

Unequivocally, the skills that you bring to the table are paramount for our nonprofit partners. For me and Isiah, [we started a nonprofit] because of a passion and a need we see in our communities. We learn the business side of it as we go. To be able to lean on the expertise of folks with a corporate perspective is absolutely invaluable.

– [Ronald B. Waddell Jr.](#)

Founder and Executive Director of Legendary Legacies Inc



The turning point for Isiah to start a nonprofit organization was when a youth he was counseling confronted him and said, "You are not listening! I told you I am a rapper." This moved Isiah, and six months later, the at-risk, rap-loving youth began to thrive artistically. Isiah states, "What he created in the [music] studio was magical. He started to talk more about himself, his life, and what he wanted for himself. We did exercises around the past, present, and future self, and I asked him, 'What do you see for yourself and your future?' That sparked the vision for Inner Voice Outer Change and wanting more [opportunities] for kids in our communities.

– [Isiah Tucker](#)

Executive Director of Inner Voice Outer Change for Youth

"The volunteers were able to digest all we do and what we need very quickly and provided very doable strategies to move forward and achieve success!"

– Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director at Dan River Basin Association.

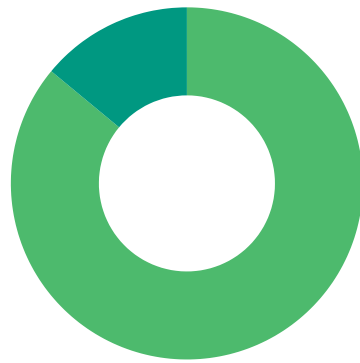
The team took the time to understand the organization, the specific division we were addressing, and the needs – including the particulars of being in Florida. The work was stellar. Given the team's time constraints, it was exactly what we asked for and of unbelievable quality. This was a wonderful experience that produced tangible, meaningful results that we can immediately begin to implement."

– ReGina Newkirk Rucci
Director of Equity at 904Ward

"Our [volunteer] team asked great questions and wanted to understand what services we provide to our families. They were very enthusiastic and complimentary about what we do. They helped us take a step back, look at the most important information for a parent to hear, and then incorporate that into our one-pager. Very helpful, and I am sending it to our families TOMORROW!!!"

– Alison Busch, Camp and Enrichment Coordinator at Wayfinders

Nonprofit Impact



86%

agreed that the volunteer team's skills and expertise matched their specific project challenge.

100%

agreed that they will be able to use the project deliverable within the next 12 months.

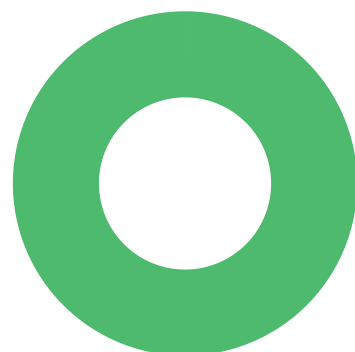


100%

agreed that the volunteers successfully completed the project scope.

72%

agreed that the work accomplished during the event made them think about their approach and work in a new way.



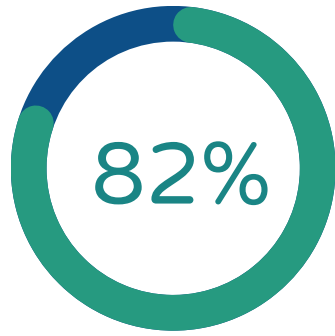
100%

agreed that they are very likely to use skills-based volunteering again after this event.

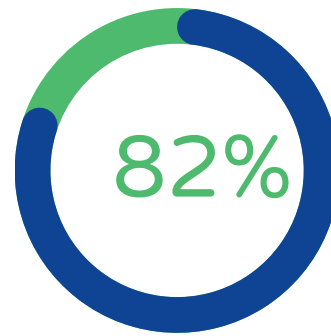
Corporate Impact



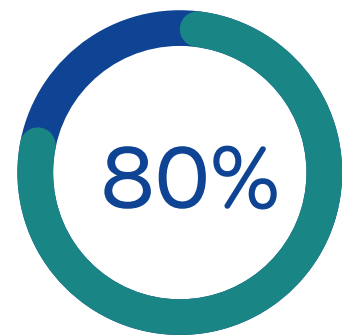
agreed that as a result of Skills for Cities, their awareness of social justice issues increased.



of volunteers strongly agree with "my company cares about and makes time for employees to engage in social justice issues, and that makes me proud to work here."



of volunteers are likely to recommend Skills for Cities to a colleague.



felt more connected to the community after the Skills for Cities event.

94% of volunteers consider Skills for Cities to be a useful professional development opportunity.

Corporate volunteers expanded their skills in areas such as:

- Collaboration & Teamwork
- Adaptability & Synthesizing Ideas in Real-Time
- Creative Thinking & Innovation
- Problem-Solving & Navigating Ambiguity
- Leadership & Strategic Thinking
- Client Focus & Empathetic Approach
- Functional Skills (Technology, Marketing, Finance, etc.)

“ I enjoyed learning about all the nonprofits in the intro session. The session reminded me to look closer to home and provide my skills to local nonprofits on a more regular basis.

– Michelle Barbin, Senior Manager, CX Planning and Communications, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

“ I did not realize the additional financial burden that unhoused folks being placed into apartments faced. Learning about Furnishing Hope's mission highlighted the importance of supporting families in transition and helping turn houses into homes.

– Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Volunteer

“ Skills for Cities brought more meaning to these causes and how our skills can help in real-time. I realized how powerful cross-sector collaboration can be for making positive change in our communities.

– Christy Siebert, Vendor Advisor & Insurance Officer, Truist

“ Skills for Cities provides a terrific virtual platform to connect people and skills with organizations in need, allowing us to make an impact in a short time frame. I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about these organizations and interact directly with the nonprofits to maximize our contribution. I would participate again.

– Fannie Mae Volunteer

Project Spotlight



Nestled in the scenic Dan River valley at the Virginia-North Carolina border, the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) has been a community and nature connector for two decades. Managing 250+ miles of trails and 100 parks across 16 counties, DRBA is a leader in environmental stewardship.

Recognizing the need to engage a younger audience, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, DRBA sought a digital makeover for their online platforms. Enter a dynamic team of Skills for Cities volunteers, including professionals from Fannie Mae. With a shared commitment to community and inclusivity, the volunteer team collaborated to develop 3-4 cost-effective, high-impact strategies and a prioritized action plan to connect with the younger generation.

Leveraging skills in business development, client growth planning, customer persona, and brand positioning, the volunteers presented a strategy deck outlining key action steps for the next 90 days. Guiding Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director at DRBA, in securing support, funding, and executing the plan, the volunteers ensured a smooth transition from strategy to action.



“

We were so excited to meet [Tiffany Haworth] today and meet each other because even though we all work for Fannie Mae, this is my first time working with this specific talented group [of volunteers]. It was really fun to meet everybody and I liked hearing everyone's great ideas. I'm super happy that we had this opportunity to connect on a project that is really impactful. We are always focused on housing [here at Fannie Mae], but I like that we're taking a step back, looking at the social determinants of health, including our environment, and stepping out of our comfort zone. This was a really exciting opportunity for me.

– Fannie Mae volunteer

“

This is actually my third time with Skills for Cities. I asked for a big order to help me engage young people. They understood who we were; they understood our capacity. And they came back with two strategies. They saw things I did not see and simple things I can implement right away to start engaging a younger audience, and I am just super, super grateful.

– Tiffany Haworth
Executive Director at Dan River Basin Association



Special thanks to our Skills for Cities
partners and participants!

We hope you continue your commitment to
building pathways to healthy communities
by using your expertise to support
community-centered organizations.



Interested in participating in the next Skills for Cities?
[Read more](#) and [reach out](#) to
partners@commonimpact.org to get involved.