

# CONNECT Program

## Summer 2019 Project Cohort Report

The CONNECT Program aims to increase data, measurement and evaluation capacity within Central Texas community organizations through the use of an online platform. It matches organizations' projects with graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin looking for applied and practical experience in the social and/or public sector.

This cohort's projects largely focused on measurement strategy and survey design. Three organizations returned to build upon the work completed during the previous cohort and CONNECT expanded its recruitment of students to three new degree programs - Social Work, Public Health, and Educational Psychology. For a closer look at the challenges addressed and deliverables produced by the Summer 2019 project cohort, visit CONNECT's [project library](#).



**11** community organizations



**28** interested students



**12** matches made



**12** projects



**86%** match rate\*



**24** deliverables produced



**100%** match success rate\*\*



**\$24,849** net worth\*\*\*



**100%** student & organization satisfaction

"We will be able to extend the recommendations [from the CONNECT fellows] to our organization by ensuring we have metrics that follow a student from intake through alumni services. This will allow us to fully understand the relationship between our student population, services rendered and student success."

Angelica Sandel, Director of Student Experiences, Goodwill Excel Center



\* number of matches made divided by number of match possibilities

\*\*number of matches made divided by number of matches with fulfilled deliverables

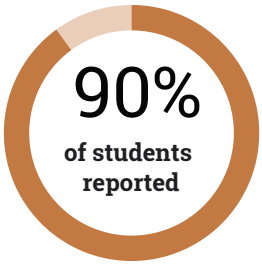
\*\*\* a total of \$24,849 was issued in the form of fellowships to students working on projects

## Lessons Learned:

Three key learnings came out of this project cohort. First, the need to establish a consistent communication schedule among the organization, graduate student, and CONNECT program coordinator was further reinforced. This was explicitly stated as an expectation at the beginning of each project and proved to be integral in mitigating challenges that arose on occasion. Second, we saw (yet again) some project scopes shift in a different direction from their initial version. Going forward, we will experiment with embedding more flexibility into project scope expectations to better accommodate such shifts. Lastly, we expanded our graduate recruiting pool beyond the LBJ School of Public Affairs. This proved to be incredibly successful, and as a result, we will continue to do so in future cohorts.

*"I think more students need to be a part of the CONNECT program. It provides practical and applicable skills - how to build systems, engage with different stakeholders, create solutions - that any student can take with them in their future careers. The program provided an opportunity to use my data knowledge and give back to my community!"*

Norielle Aurelio,  
CONNECT Fellow



they would work with their client again



their CONNECT experience as very or extremely useful



their CONNECT student as very or extremely effective in synthesizing information, presenting findings, and recommending solutions

*"We learned a great deal about what goes into the creation of surveys that are backed by validated research. We now have a tool to measure outcomes of our education events and then use that data to help us create better outcomes for our students."*

Holly Melear, Founder & Director, STEAMSPACE Education Outreach

