



CROWD
Academy

REPORT

Empowering the South:

The Impact of the CROWD Fellowship

DECEMBER 2023





TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	Introduction
7	Section I: What is CROWD?
10	Section II: What is the CROWD Fellowship?
13	Section III: What Were the Goals of the CROWD Fellowship?
16	Section IV: Analyzing the Performance of the CROWD Fellowship
31	Conclusion
32	Appendix A: List of CROWD Fellows
33	Appendix B: CROWD Fellowship Evaluation Memo by SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
55	Appendix C: SCSJ Interview Guide for CROWD Fellows





INTRODUCTION

In 2020, Southern Coalition for Social Justice (“SCSJ”), a 501(c)(3) organization, launched the Community Redistricting Organizations Working for Democracy (“CROWD”) Academy initiative to educate southern communities about the redistricting process and equip them with the tools to engage in the process. The program focused its work in the Southeastern region, hosting academies in eight states. Twenty-five CROWD Academy participants were then selected as fellows, paired with local host organizations, and further trained on map drawing and analysis in their local communities. As discussed in more detail below, these CROWD fellows played a critical role in allowing the communities they served to have a voice in the local and statewide redistricting that impacts their lives and impacts the voting power of their communities.

Following the 2021 redistricting cycle, SCSJ began taking steps to conduct an evaluation of the CROWD Fellowship Program focused on identifying its strengths and weaknesses and assessing its overall effectiveness. To that end, SCSJ contracted with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (“SERVE”) to provide third-party evaluation services, including collecting and analyzing data through a survey of the host organizations and in-state partners that hosted CROWD fellows for the duration of the program. In addition, SCSJ staff conducted one-on-one interviews and collected survey responses from CROWD fellows to get their feedback on the program. This report summarizes the results of the various surveys and interviews conducted by SERVE and SCSJ of the individuals and organizations that make up the CROWD fellowship program, with the goal of providing a robust assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the program. With this report, we hope to reflect on the massive undertaking that CROWD endeavored to carry out and learn from this first iteration of the program by memorializing what worked, what did not work, and what efforts we think we should focus on in future iterations of the CROWD fellowship program in order to improve it. The report will also lay out the structure and goals of the CROWD fellowship, including a few case studies of CROWD fellows whose journeys are illustrative of CROWD’s vision.

We would like to thank Fair Representation in Redistricting (“FRR”) for their generous support to complete this report, and the SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro for their evaluation services. Lastly, we would like to thank all of our CROWD fellows, CROWD scholars, and the organizations that hosted fellows, all of whom truly changed the communities where they live for the better and spoke truth to power. We are grateful for your service and participation.



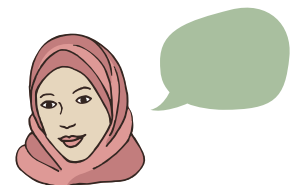
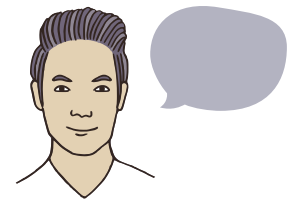
SECTION I:

WHAT IS CROWD?

Redistricting is something that affects voters from the local to the federal level, influencing voters' representation at each stage of government. Because redistricting has such a large impact on who gets elected, decisions about boundaries often dictate what policies governmental bodies ultimately enact. Anyone who cares

about the candidates elected to represent their community and the policies they enact should also care about redistricting. This means community members—who have a direct stake in how various policies impact their community—should have a voice in the redistricting process. Despite this, redistricting has often been a behind-closed-doors activity, with the relevant mapping technology and expertise jealously guarded by a few powerful individuals. This is why SCSJ developed and launched the [CROWD Academy Program](#) and CROWD fellowship program, as a way to bring the requisite technology and expertise directly to impacted communities at the grassroots level.

Much has changed since the start of the last decennial redistricting cycle in 2011, making the work that CROWD facilitated more critical than ever to maintaining a **democracy of the people, by the people, and for the people**. One critical change that occurred was the United States Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which diminished the special protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ("VRA") by essentially eliminating the VRA's preclearance requirement for covered jurisdictions that had a history of discriminating against Black voters



and other voters of color. The preclearance requirement was crucial to ensuring a fair redistricting process because it prohibited those jurisdictions who were subject to it from implementing many changes to voting laws without *first* proving to the U.S. Attorney General or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia that the change did not discriminate against protected minorities. Another major legal shift came with the Supreme Court's 2019 ruling in *Rucho v. Common Cause*. In that case, the Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering claims present political questions beyond the reach of federal courts.

In 2020, with an impending redistricting cycle about to commence and with legal protections against both racial and partisan gerrymandering severely diminished, SCSJ recognized a critical need for community engagement in the redistricting process in order to create maps that would be representative of the diverse communities throughout the South. This assessment was informed by years of representing community groups, such as the NAACP and the League of Women Voters, in redistricting litigation across the South. Thus, the CROWD Academies and CROWD fellowship program were born, to provide a method for community members to learn about redistricting and then to use that information to advocate for fair and equitable maps.

CROWD Academies were established to turn local organizers and community advocates across the South into redistricting experts, or CROWD scholars. Every individual who completed the training at a CROWD Academy became an official CROWD scholar. CROWD scholars were then invited to apply for fellowships with CROWD, where fellows were sponsored to work alongside state and local host organizations, as well as experts engaged by CROWD as mentors.

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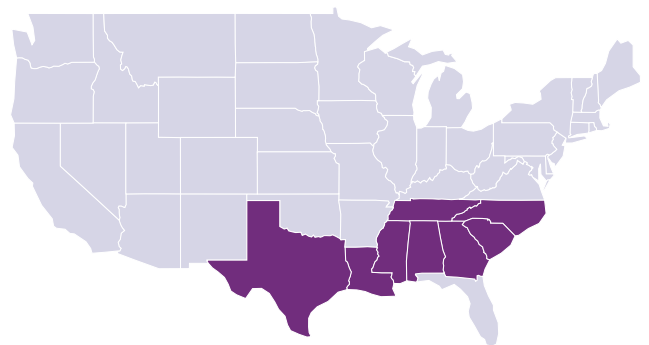
In partnership with grassroots organizations from the South, SCSJ hosted the inaugural cycle of CROWD Academies beginning in 2020. Spanning eight states, CROWD Academies were the South’s largest community-based effort to organize voters and community members to engage in electoral map drawing. The CROWD scholars and fellows helped establish a major public presence in the redistricting process that followed the 2020 Census, ensuring that vulnerable communities were empowered to make their voices heard in the legislative process – and in some cases, all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.



SECTION II:

WHAT IS THE CROWD FELLOWSHIP?

Through the CROWD Academies, SCSJ and its in-state partners provided training to hundreds of scholars in 32 CROWD Academies held in eight states across the South: North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas. These trainings focused on three areas: the legislative process around redistricting, communications around redistricting, and analyzing and drawing district maps using census data. The CROWD fellowship program was designed to sponsor three to four CROWD scholars from each state's cohorts as fellows. CROWD fellows were paid \$20,000 as contractors through their host organizations to work 20 hours per week on specific redistricting goals they had selected for their communities from May 2021 to May 2022, and in some instances through the end of 2022. In addition to CROWD program leaders at SCSJ, CROWD fellows were provided with a support system of experts enlisted through CROWD to serve as ongoing resources over the course of the fellowship. Each piece of the CROWD fellowship support system is defined as follows and the full list of CROWD fellows with their host organization is available at **Appendix A:**



CROWD Fellow:

CROWD fellows were paid contractors focused on empowering their community by increasing local capacities around redistricting with a focus on redistricting education, advocacy, and map/data analysis. CROWD fellows were paired with a host organization and were provided with: an intensive training bootcamp on topics including GIS/legal/legislative advocacy/communications conducted by CROWD program leaders and partners; a laptop computer loaded with the latest licensed Maptitude software; a designated GIS mentor; a designated Legal Team Point Person; and ongoing access to CROWD program leaders.

CROWD Program Leaders:

The CROWD program was led by SCSJ's Networks Director for Voting Rights in collaboration with SCSJ's Voting Rights, Research, and Communications teams. The Networks Director for Voting Rights was responsible for overseeing the program including its development, implementation, and tracking. Together, the Networks Director and other SCSJ staff, planned the CROWD program's structure and timeline, developed its content and tracking methods, and implemented the content.

CROWD In-State Partner:

The CROWD fellowship program partnered with an in-state organization in each of the eight states where it provided training. The CROWD in-state partner worked with CROWD program leaders to identify local speakers to present at CROWD Academy trainings, recruited local organizers to attend CROWD Academies and become CROWD scholars, and finally served as a partner in soliciting, accepting, and reviewing applications for the CROWD fellowship program. For the duration of the fellowship, CROWD in-state partners were available to the CROWD fellow to provide the following organizing and logistical support:

- Work with the fellow, in collaboration with a community group, to assess the organizing landscape in that community to ensure that all voices are represented.
- Assist the fellow and the community group in developing an advocacy campaign timeline and strategy.
- Upon the fellow's invitation, provide other communications or organizing support for the community group's advocacy.
- Ensure the community group's basic needs in building a successful campaign or record

for potential litigation (i.e., rides to meetings, listserv notifications re: hearings, printed materials as necessary to support the campaign).

In some cases, the CROWD in-state partner was permitted to also serve as a fellow's host organization.

CROWD Host Organization:

The CROWD host organization was a local community organization that agreed to serve as the main partner to the fellow in the course of their redistricting work. The CROWD fellow could be involved in determining who their host organization would be. The host organization was expected to work with the fellow to incorporate the organization's goals into the fellow's individualized work plan and to serve as the primary partner to the fellow in carrying out that work plan. The ideal host organizations had an established presence in the prospective fellow's organizing area, an existing relationship with the prospective fellow (i.e. the prospective fellow was a current volunteer), the capacity to provide supervision and ongoing staff support to the fellow, the capacity to administer the fellow's paycheck from the re-grant, and committed to bi-monthly reporting on the fellow's progress.

CROWD Geographic Information Systems ("GIS") Mentor:

The CROWD GIS mentor was a GIS expert contracted through CROWD to provide map analysis and drawing support to CROWD fellows over the course of their fellowship. Each fellow was paired with a specific GIS mentor, who provided them with 5-10 hours of technical assistance and education per month for the duration of the fellowship. The mentor engaged with the fellow in the following ways, among others: (a) assisting the fellow with SCSJ-designed learning exercises,

either in further explaining the exercise or other necessary guidance; (b) helping the fellow troubleshoot issues with Maptitude or deepening understanding of the software's utilities; (c) assisting the fellow with the import of relevant data, such as political data or communities of interest data; and (d) providing feedback on fellow-drawn draft maps.

CROWD Legal Team Point Person (“LTPP”):

The CROWD LTPP was a civil rights attorney with experience in voting rights litigation. The LTPP offered the following support:

- Helping the fellow to understand timelines for redistricting in the jurisdiction in which the fellow was working with the community group.
- Helping the fellow to understand the process by which the method of election in a jurisdiction may be changed.
- Identifying jurisdictions where a racially polarized voting (“RPV”) analysis may be useful and coordinating between the fellow and SCSJ’s research team to have that RPV analysis performed.

- Providing initial analysis of potential legal issues in current districts/method of election.
- Providing analysis of legal compliance of draft maps that the fellow may draw for community groups.
- Providing analysis of legal issues in legislatively proposed maps.

LTPPs were asked to connect with their assigned fellow at least monthly to offer support.

CROWD Scholars:

CROWD scholars were participants in CROWD Academies who did not become CROWD fellows. These scholars provided a network of local advocates with an understanding of the redistricting process that fellows could lean on in carrying out their redistricting advocacy work. CROWD scholars were encouraged to provide support in the following ways:

- Collaborating with the fellows to ensure that the fellow was not overwhelmed with requests for Redistricting 101 presentations.
- Working with the fellow to share intel about the landscape in a community where a fellow may be working with a community group.





SECTION III:

WHAT WERE THE GOALS OF THE CROWD FELLOWSHIP?

One constant refrain at every CROWD fellow orientation was the idea that “Redistricting is more than a once-a-decade issue... it is an ongoing issue, and it is intersectional.” In saying this, CROWD program leaders sought to impress upon the fellows how fair districts could turbocharge the issue-based organizing work they were already engaging in within their communities. In other words, redistricting is not a stand-alone issue. It must be understood and considered against the backdrop of the other issues communities already care about, such as local education issues, the impact of school-to-prison pipelines on minority youth, and local environmental issues, such as the location of hog farms whose pollutants can cause health issues for those with homes located nearby. This is a major reason why the CROWD fellowship application process focused on prioritizing candidates who already had an organizing background, even if

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it meant their first foray into data analysis was at the CROWD Academy itself. To the extent that fellows lacked the level of local grassroots organizing experience CROWD was seeking in an ideal fellowship candidate, the hope was that the host organization could bring its resources and local relationships to the table to support the fellow. For this reason, local – rather than national – advocacy organizations were solicited to serve as host organizations to CROWD fellows.

The five primary goals of the CROWD fellowship were: education and information sharing; pre- and post- redistricting community engagement and advocacy; storytelling; map analysis and drawing; and sustainable growth. Each goal is defined below.

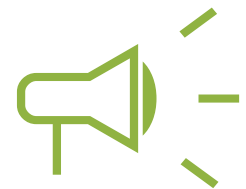
Goal 1: Education and Information Sharing

Because redistricting has long been a closed-door process, many otherwise engaged citizens do not understand the impact redistricting has on their communities and the issues they already care about. Knowledge is power, and the goal of education and information sharing was to build a base of community members who understand what redistricting is, how it impacts their communities, and how the process works in the jurisdictions they are part of. CROWD fellows were encouraged to raise awareness and build understanding around redistricting in the ways that are most suited to their communities – including providing Redistricting 101's, plugging into local hubs (like churches and other community groups), social media, and more.



Goal 2: Pre- and Post- Redistricting Community Engagement and Advocacy

In every jurisdiction, there is a legislative body in charge of redistricting. This goal intended to build the community's capacity for engagement in the legislative process and advocacy supporting that engagement both before, during, and after that legislative process. Fellows were encouraged to connect their communities directly with the redistricting process by encouraging them to make their voices heard through actions like giving testimony at public hearings, making objections where appropriate, and in certain cases, bringing legal challenges if their concerns were ignored by the legislative body in charge of redistricting.



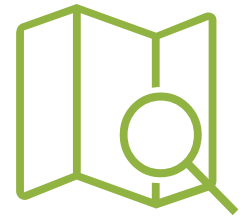
Goal 3: Storytelling: Building a Community's Ability to Share Its Story as a Tool for Change

A community's ability to share its story is a critical tool for change. This goal sought to build capacity for raising the community's voice and sharing its redistricting story with the world using various communication tools and strategies. CROWD fellows were encouraged to identify how redistricting intersects with other important local issues of concern to their community and highlight those intersections in their redistricting communications.



Goal 4: Map Analysis and Drawing

The ability to analyze proposed maps and to draft one's own maps was key to effectively intervening in the redistricting process. This goal sought to build capacity for map analysis and drawing by encouraging the CROWD fellow to train other community members in map analysis and drawing using Dave's Redistricting App.



Goal 5: Sustainable Growth

This goal acted as a catch-all for any other needs a fellow may have seen in their community that are key to ensuring their work lends itself to sustainable growth. Some areas suffer from a significant lack of infrastructure, and fellows were encouraged to focus their efforts on pursuits that would help build growth that is sustainable in such areas.



Together, these goals represented the various capacities CROWD sought to build within target communities. Fellows were encouraged to set their own more specific goals tailored to the existing capacities and needs of their communities, with an eye to the above five goals. The goal-setting process was structured by the [Visioning Guide](#) – a tool CROWD provided to fellows and host organizations during their fellowship onboarding sessions that were designed to help them build out a work plan to guide their fellowship. The reason for asking CROWD fellows to collaborate with their host organizations in building their work plan was to center local knowledge of local needs. Local knowledge of local needs is a central value to CROWD's approach, which prioritizes self-determination of communities, rather than other experts parachuting in from the outside to determine and pursue an agenda and then exit the community afterward.

What a successful CROWD fellowship looked like differed depending on the existing capacities and needs of the community the fellow was working within. In some instances, a successful fellowship

meant a heavy focus on base-building, putting more eyes and ears on the ground to monitor redistricting, and creating measurable gains in capacity where there previously was little. By way of example, South Carolina CROWD Fellow Charles Mann exemplified this type of success, as he was able to encourage community engagement around South Carolina redistricting efforts and local redistricting efforts in Spartanburg County. In other areas, a successful fellowship meant monitoring and objecting to the legislative process, and when those objections went ignored, filing legal challenges to the resulting maps. Alabama CROWD Fellows Khadidah Stone and Shalela Dowdy both became plaintiffs in the *Allen v. Milligan* case challenging Alabama's Congressional Map after unsuccessful appeals to the Alabama Legislature to draw a constitutional Congressional Map.

As will be detailed below, the CROWD fellowship was generally successful in achieving many of these goals, with CROWD fellows across the South contributing greatly to the redistricting wins that were achieved before the United States Supreme Court and other courts over the past two years.



SECTION IV:

ANALYZING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CROWD FELLOWSHIP

This report uses a mixed-methods approach, including in-depth interviews with fellows and surveys completed by fellows, host organizations, and state partners. All interviews and surveys were analyzed by an in-house qualitative researcher to identify overarching themes and trends in these responses. These methods give us a relatively holistic view of the successes and areas of improvement for the CROWD fellowship program.

SCSJ contracted with the SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro to collect and report on data from host organizations and state partners to inform this report. This data collection

included both surveys and focus groups. SERVE received survey responses from 56% of the 18 organizations and partners that received the survey. Eighty percent were characterized as small organizations and 70% of organizations have been active for over 10 years. This survey was supplemented by focus groups with organizations and state partners. The survey and focus groups primarily focused on how well the CROWD fellowship aligned with the goals of the fellowship (as discussed above in Section III), the preparation that organizations received on mentoring fellows, the training fellows received, and other aspects related to the dynamics between fellows and their

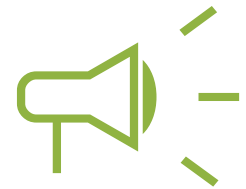


host organizations. The full SERVE Report is attached as **Appendix B**.

SCSJ distributed a survey to fellows and received 13 responses (52% of fellows). The surveys collected mainly multiple choice and short-answer responses from fellows on their training, experiences with LTPPs, and their success and difficulties during their fellowship. To complement these surveys, SCSJ held interviews with fellows immediately after their fellowship to elaborate on these topics and provide further context (See **Appendix C**). SCSJ was able to interview 11 fellows in total (44% of fellows).

The CROWD fellowship program’s goals were created to set fellows up for success but to also help make sure that they were able to adequately assist communities with understanding the redistricting process and to be informed citizens. In this section, we analyze the results of the SERVE survey of host organizations and in-state partners, and the SCSJ survey and interviews of CROWD fellows, to see whether the CROWD fellowship met its stated goals. Based on the results of both surveys, many of the responses to questions about each goal overlapped with each other, or had common themes, therefore some of the goals are combined together.

Goals 1 and 2: Community Education, Engagement, and Advocacy



The goal of Community Engagement and Advocacy (Goal 2) overlapped with the partial goal of Community Education (Goal 1) in many respects, so they are discussed in part together. On the goal of Community Engagement and Advocacy, we sought to understand how fellows managed their outreach efforts and organized public-facing events to educate and engage community members in redistricting. Unanimously, host organizations who completed exit surveys described their organization's goals to be "very aligned" with the CROWD fellowship's goals on community engagement and advocacy.

Fellows were intentionally placed in the communities where they live and were purposefully put with host organizations that were already trusted voices in the communities where the fellows would serve. The aim of the fellows' connection to the host organization was to allow for the fellows to connect with community members in a more efficient and effective manner. The fellows' ability to connect with community members and to engage them in the redistricting process—among other resources, providing them with educational resources in order to become advocates for their community—was one of the fellows' most important responsibilities.

Fellows noted that, in their communities, it was rare to see political education, similar to what the CROWD Academies and CROWD fellows were offering around redistricting. Given this lack of political education, and the general lack of awareness within their respective communities about redistricting, many fellows felt that their work was impactful and that they were able to serve as point persons for community members who had questions about redistricting or mapping.

“

Just being able to mobilize the community to the point where people come to me, apparently I'm the redistricting person. Literally, in my city people come to me for that. So, [] people are going to go testify at our city council meeting and they're asking me, you know, what should I say, what are the points of redistricting, what are the hot topics that need prepping, I'm going to talk to city council.”



“

Nobody else was really doing that. Redistricting? They had nowhere else to go. [...] If you were interested in getting started, I didn't see too many avenues.”



The type of community engagement around redistricting that CROWD encouraged was new to many fellows, and it presented new challenges for them in their community engagement efforts, especially in the beginning. Additionally, while fellows at least had some prior experience with organizing, some had never organized community engagement events before and faced a learning curve when planning, promoting, and executing these public events.

Many fellows noted multiple times that they struggled to get consistent attendance rates at their in-person events since people were primarily attracted to virtual events rather than in-person events. There were varied opinions as to why this was a challenge. Some fellows identified general capacity issues as contributing to early challenges that affected community engagement. On the other hand, others found the lack of attendance was largely attributed to concerns about attending in-person events during an ongoing pandemic rather than a lack of support from LTPPs or host organizations. Luckily, most fellows who identified these issues with engagement at the beginning of their fellowship found success by the end of their fellowship once they adjusted their methods to fit the community's needs. This represents how fellows developed new skills and a deeper understanding of both organizing and their communities. However, these reflections also help identify areas for future growth in CROWD. Specifically, LTPPs and host organizations may need to be more hands-on in initially helping fellows plan and execute events.

There is potentially room for more training in the future on organizing events and reaching out to community members. This could make fellows feel more comfortable in hosting these public-facing community events. One host organization offered in their exit survey that additional training on list building, meeting management, asset mapping, and community organizing would be beneficial for future fellows. More training could help alleviate some of the learning curves that fellows faced at the beginning of their fellowships and allow them to further develop those skills throughout their time with CROWD.

Despite these areas for improvement, fellows generally felt more confident in their organizing skills and capabilities by the end of the fellowship. When selecting fellows, SCSJ searched for people with previous organizing experience so that the shift to organizing around redistricting was less difficult, but it still remained challenging for some fellows. Nevertheless, this fellowship helped

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them develop new skills and strengthen their organizing skills throughout their time with CROWD. One fellow had never shared public testimony before and, while he found it nerve-wracking, it ended up being a positive experience for him and improved his confidence in public speaking.

All of the CROWD fellows were very instrumental in organizing and educating their communities about the redistricting process, and CROWD supported fellows and scholars in developing capacity for redistricting policy analysis in states where existing infrastructure was less robust. For example, SC CROWD Fellow Charles Mann worked in partnership with SOLVE grantee Spartanburg Initiative for Racial Equity Now (SIREN) to spearhead local advocacy regarding the Spartanburg School District 7 Board in an effort to help community activists push to make the school board more accountable and reflective of the community. Charles and SIREN advocated for a change in election method from a hybrid at-large / single-member district method to nine single-member districts in the hopes that at least one of the new single-member districts would elect an additional candidate of choice for Black voters. LTPPs assisted with these advocacy efforts through legal research to inform policy analysis. While this advocacy work did not materialize in the single-member districting plans, it did foster new relationships and garner attention from local community leaders and media, thereby laying the groundwork for fair district maps to be achieved through continued advocacy.

Charles and his local partners exemplified the way that a CROWD fellowship can be instrumental in adding eyes on the ground by connecting local community members to resources and building capacity where there was previously little.

Goals 3 and 4: Map Analysis, Map Drawing, and Information Sharing

On the goal of Map Analysis and Drawing, we sought to understand whether the fellows were able to leverage the training and guidance they received to be a technical resource for their targeted community and to use those skills to empower members of the community during the map-drawing process. The fellow's ability to be a resource in the map-drawing process was a tremendous asset to the community. Many fellows reflected on this point in their exit interviews and surveys.

Based on fellow interviews and survey questions, one of the biggest highlights for fellows was learning how to use Dave's Redistricting App ("DRA") and Maptitude. Fellows enjoyed learning how to use these tools, because while that allowed them to show community members what certain maps could look like,



it also allowed them to analyze proposed maps from various legislative bodies and propose alternatives.

Both the SERVE and SCSJ Surveys had several questions focused on the map analysis and drawing goal. These questions interrogated the effectiveness of the various software platforms that fellows had learned to use, the fellow's ability to share map analysis with community members, and the level of assistance from the fellow's host organization and/or in-state partner with map analysis.

a. Effectiveness of Dave's Redistricting App and Maptitude

Fellows were asked about the effectiveness of the software that they learned to use, and in general, fellows gave positive reviews of the software as well as the technical training that they received. While they may have had preferences for one software over another, a majority found both Maptitude and DRA to be influential and insightful to their work to some degree. One fellow shared that the training they received was crucial to the success of their fellowship:

“

That was probably one of the most exciting components of it because I [...] didn't have any mapping experience. [...] It was interesting to see how districts were split. How it negatively affected districts of interest. Pretty much, the goals that were set by SCSJ I was able to see those goals met.”



Most fellows gravitated towards DRA software, because they found it was more user-friendly than Maptitude, but found Maptitude allowed for more in-depth analysis by comparison. With that said, information on Maptitude was flagged as potentially being outdated throughout recorded exit interviews, while DRA seemed to update multiple times throughout the fellowship. Additionally, Maptitude was seen as potentially too in-depth by multiple fellows who only needed baseline software for their redistricting work, which did not require all the additional data built into Maptitude, but this was not a view held by a majority of respondents. A focus on accessibility for community members also attracted fellows to DRA software. Fellows found it more accessible to use DRA when training community members because Maptitude requires a relatively expensive license to use the software. Because DRA is a free online application and can be shared with anyone, it became an asset when fellows worked with community members to draft maps.

Some fellows did not feel like they fully grasped Maptitude by the end of their fellowship but cited the technical assistance and support as helpful in attempting to learn how to use it. Host organizations agreed with the difficulty

in using Maptitude in their exit surveys, sharing that fellows might benefit from further technical training in Maptitude so they could be more acclimated with the software. While some fellows may have struggled with the software, the technical support consistently received relatively positive reviews in exit interviews and surveys. The only issues were that sometimes the responses to support requests could be delayed, and fellows might require more time to get trained on the software. There is potential room for further support staff in this area to help address the needs of fellows when they encounter issues with either software.

Another interesting revelation is that many fellows felt that being able to pull from different types of data sets (ex. GIS) allowed them to reach better research conclusions for their community. After the training and experience gained in this fellowship, many fellows were familiar enough with this research to have preferences in the types of data they use and were comfortable looking at newer sources of data. This increase in level of comfort with data is important for continuing to use mapping software in the future for fellows who plan to continue this work.

...many fellows felt they left tangible tools, skills, and knowledge with community members and organizations that could help them advocate in their future endeavors.

b. Fellows' Ability to Share Map Analysis and Map-Drawing Skills with Community Members

Fellows were asked about their level of comfort in using their map-drawing and map-analysis skills post-fellowship, and many fellows felt they left tangible tools, skills, and knowledge with community members and organizations that could help them advocate in their future endeavors. While fellows may have preferred either DRA or Maptitude, the ability to share redistricting information with the community and fellows' reported comfort level in sharing their mapping skills with community members post-fellowship is relatively high.

“

I learned so much about mapping and redistricting and I really learned how to educate other people on it which I thought was really impactful for those communities because I was able to do sessions for communities all over Georgia. And representing different types of communities as well, so I think that really helped a lot. And I'm honestly pretty satisfied with how much we were able to do.”



It is incredibly difficult to engage in redistricting work without the technical training that CROWD fellows received in map analysis and map drawing using DRA and Maptitude. As a result of this technical training, fellows felt relatively confident that because of the trainings they held, community members are more capable of continuing to work on civic education, awareness, and training with their communities independently of the fellow.

As stated above, most fellows gravitated towards DRA, and one of the main reasons fellows preferred DRA was its accessibility. Community members found it more user-friendly, affordable, and collaborative. Most fellows praised the training on this software, especially for making them feel comfortable enough to share this information with others. Because of this, community members are now capable of answering mapping and redistricting questions themselves to a degree because of the training they received from fellows. Additionally, fellows were much more likely to share maps they produced in DRA with community members because DRA allowed anyone to create an account for free, whereas Maptitude is cost-prohibitively expensive. Because many of the events and trainings held by fellows were virtual, it was important to use software that was easily teachable while online. Fellows noted that DRA presented fewer technical issues when community members engaged with the software and that they felt more comfortable using the software after the training than Maptitude. Fellows were focused on making these trainings more comprehensive, less frustrating, and more usable for community members moving forward.

Goals 3 and 5: Community Storytelling and Sustainable Growth

CROWD sought to bring local grassroots organizers who were already active in their community into redistricting work. By equipping them with map analysis and drawing skills, communications support, and further understanding of the legislative process, CROWD was relatively successful in enhancing community connections specific to redistricting through their host organizations, as well as creating the infrastructure for sustainable growth and advocacy longevity. These community connections and relationships were important because it is these connections that will sustain the organizing and advocacy after the end of the CROWD fellowship. These connections are also helpful because they help communities to tell the story about how redistricting influences representation of their communities in electoral spaces where elected officials make decisions about issues that affect the community.



One Fellow stated:

“

The fellowship is a year, but, you know, if you're really passionate about this it will be something that you will continue to do whether you're being reimbursed for it or not.”



Being paired with local host organizations was particularly helpful for fellows who were new to organizing around redistricting. The nature of the relationship between the fellow support system (host organization and LTPP) and the fellow is an important factor for sustainable growth, because the relationship between the fellows and their host organizations could extend past the end of the fellowship program, plus, communities will hopefully continue their advocacy around redistricting long after the fellows leave. Some fellows faced challenges concerning working with their host organizations or LTPPs, and also substantively in their organizing efforts when shifting to redistricting, both of which may have affected building infrastructure for sustainable growth.

a. Communication Between Host Organization, LTPPs, and CROWD Fellows

Fellows were paired with a host organization and a LTPP to help guide and assist them through their fellowship and to help them with map drawing and analysis. As noted above, the host organizations are local organizations who have connections to the communities where the fellows served, so the host organization's assistance, communication, and support through the fellowship is important. The level of communication between a host organization or an LTPP, and a fellow is correlated with the opportunity for sustainable growth in that community and sustained advocacy opportunities. SCSJ provided a handbook and orientation session for host organizations which received generally positive reviews. Survey results show that all host organizations who completed the survey felt they received clear information about their role in the CROWD program to assist fellows in assessing the community landscape. Almost all respondents also felt clear on their roles to assist fellows with advocacy campaigns and provide communication and organizational support when requested by fellows.

Pairing CROWD fellows with host organizations and LTPPs helped some fellows overcome initial barriers they faced at the beginning of the fellowship, such as lack of connections to redistricting efforts in the area and overall goal setting. However, the

Pairing CROWD fellows with host organizations and LTPPs helped some fellows overcome initial barriers...

responses on LTPP relationships and the effectiveness of communication tended to be mixed. Even fellows who interacted with their LTPP regularly to discuss their goals and receive guidance responded neutrally or negatively about their comfort in reaching out to their LTPP for questions or concerns. This may be due to fellows utilizing other resources available to answer their questions, especially surrounding technical issues, which was a solution noted by a few fellows. Luckily, this was not a consistent issue across the CROWD fellowship, and most fellows had relatively positive responses on their relationships with their LTPP and host organization, even if there was room for improvement. For example, some host organizations were able to provide additional substantive support to the fellows through additional training on mapping software, intensive “Redistricting 101” sessions, opportunities to attend state and regional conferences within the host organization, and connections to experts who might be beneficial to the fellows—such as voting rights attorneys or mapping professionals.

b. Nature of Host Organization and LTPP Support and Supervision

A consistent discussion among fellows in their exit interviews and surveys evaluated the varying levels of supervision from their host organizations. Some host organizations were able to provide the exceptional supervision that SCSJ originally envisioned they would, but others struggled. This could be due to the capacity at these organizations that made it easier or more challenging for them to engage regularly with their assigned fellows.

Most responses described the host organizations as having less supervision over the fellows than respondents expected. The reactions to this style were mixed: some fellows enjoyed working independently while others felt they needed that additional support throughout.

“

I like that we had the free range to kind of work out our goals and follow up on those goals on our own.”



The level of support and supervision was commonly attributed to how regularly fellows met and communicated with their LTPPs, and how much they circled back to their original work plans that were intended to guide their work throughout the fellowship. Ideally, LTPPs would meet with their fellows monthly. For the most part, fellows and LTPPs were able to achieve this goal, but, similar to the level of supervision from host organizations, there were some fellows and LTPPs who were unable to achieve this frequency. A potential solution would be for SCSJ to emphasize and communicate the importance of LTPPs

meeting monthly with their fellows and using the work plans they created as a cornerstone for these check-ins, as well as communicating the importance of host organizations communicating effectively with the fellows.

It's unclear whether a more "hands-off" approach for LTPPs and host organizations delivered consistently positive or negative results, and it seems to differ on a case-by-case basis. Allowing fellows to work independently allows them to feel more creative in their methods and have a sense of ownership over their work. But, alternatively, this "hands-off" approach could lead to fellows feeling lost and unsupported, especially if they're having difficulty navigating their planned work. In the future, further conversations about preferred leadership styles from fellows or preliminary discussions with host organizations and LTPPs could be beneficial to ensure that everyone is on the same page going into the fellowship.

The experiences of CROWD fellows in Alabama and Galveston, Texas serve as two strong examples where host organization support helped fellows make a lasting impact in the communities they served and plant the seeds for sustainable growth in the organizing and advocacy capacity of those communities.

Alabama CROWD Fellows Khadidah Stone, Shalela Dowdy, Stephanie Barnett, and Zephyr Scalzetti, made a lasting impact within Alabama communities around Alabama's congressional map. Khadidah was paired with Alabama Forward. Shalela was paired with the NAACP Mobile Branch. Stephanie was paired with the League of Women Voters Alabama. And Zephyr Scalzetti was paired with The Ordinary Peoples Society. Each used the skills and tools they gained through CROWD to engage deeply in the legislative process that produced Alabama's new Congressional map. In November 2021, Khadidah and Shalela were a part of a lawsuit challenging that map in federal court, alleging that the newly enacted map diluted the votes of Black voters in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. This case made its way up to the Supreme Court of the United States, which delivered a majority opinion affirming an order striking down Alabama's Congressional map for violating Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

This positive outcome had near-immediate ripple effects in other states, such as Louisiana and Georgia, where there were also challenges to those states' district maps under Section 2 of the Voting Rights

This case made its way up to the Supreme Court of the United States, which delivered a majority opinion affirming an order striking down of Alabama's congressional map for violating Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Act. Host organization Power Coalition for Equity and Justice is a plaintiff in the Louisiana redistricting case, *Robinson v. Ardoin*. The Alabama CROWD fellows were able to bring community members together to learn about the Alabama mapping process, and to testify against maps that would dilute the Black vote in Alabama, and they helped plant the seeds for continued organizing and advocacy in many Alabama communities.

Roxy D. Hall Williamson, a Texas CROWD fellow, also galvanized her community around local redistricting in Galveston. With support from her host organization (the TX NAACP), in-state partner (the League of Women Voters Texas), and other community members, she sought to engage in the process surrounding the redrawing of commissioners' precincts for the Commissioners Court in Galveston County (the county's primary governing body). Roxy educated



county residents about redistricting and let residents know about opportunities to share their views on potential maps, to ensure that they had a voice during the process, including testifying at a public hearing about the Commissioners Court's redistricting. Despite these efforts, the redistricting process was not transparent, and the Commissioners Court passed a new map that dismantled the only minority-majority district. In April 2022, SCSJ, Texas Civil Rights Project, Wilkie Farr & Gallagher LLP, and Spencer & Associates, PLLC filed a lawsuit against Galveston County over that newly enacted map on behalf of three local NAACP branches and the Galveston League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) alleging claims of intentional discrimination, racial gerrymandering, and vote dilution under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. On October 13, 2023, a federal judge struck down the challenged map ruling in favor of the plaintiffs' Section 2 claim calling it a "stark and jarring" violation of the Voting Rights Act. Galveston County was formerly covered under the preclearance provision under the VRA, and thus exemplifies a target area of focus for the CROWD program. On November 10, 2023, a panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed the district court's ruling on appeal, but on November 28, 2023 the full Court of Appeals decided to rehear the case en banc, meaning as a full court, and the matter currently remains pending.

c. Challenges Facing Fellows and Lessons Learned

SCSJ's surveys and interviews found that several fellows would not label themselves as "formal organizers" prior to their fellowship. Because of this, some

fellows struggled with issues around organizing when trying to complete their fellowship. Learning these organizing skills is important for creating sustainable growth in a community, and although many fellows were able to eventually learn this skillset, they still encountered such issues, including the following:

1. Lack of connections to the community, especially for local-level organizing and rural areas.

Relationship building is a crucial part of southern organizing. Southern and rural organizing specifically tends to be incredibly reliant on long-term relationship building. Since this is especially true in rural areas with smaller and longstanding communities dedicated to advocacy work around their community's specific needs, it can be difficult to adjust to new organizing spaces if it involves building new relationships. Because of this, fellows needed an "in", or point of contact within the community, to get started and build trust. The host organizations were a way to build this trust, but depending on the relationship with the host organization, interviews showed that sometimes it took more effort to build that trust and to get buy-in from the community.

“

On the local level, it was really tough. Some places I really just couldn't help. [...] I just had no connections there... Good luck. Here's the video. Here's the PowerPoint. Good luck, I'm gonna cross my fingers for you. There are some areas where I just couldn't reach. That was probably the biggest challenge. [...] Some of the smaller places were really tough.”



Struggles with integrating into a community network differed on a case-by-case basis. While some fellows struggled to integrate into the organizing networks in their community, especially if their relationship with their host organization was less than ideal, others succeeded in finding connections relatively quickly.

Despite this challenge, this fellowship inevitably helped to cultivate those long-standing relationships that some fellows may not have had when they started working with CROWD. Engaging with new community members that they may not have encountered before, even if they had previous organizing experience, helped to build out their organizing networks in their respective areas and hopefully will lead to the long-term sustainable growth in communities that the CROWD program and CROWD fellowship set out to create.

2. Lack of community knowledge, such as existing community relationships, conflicts, and neighborhood dynamics.

Because of pre-existing conflict and dynamics within communities, some fellows struggled to work cooperatively in certain spaces. Conflict management training could be helpful in this scenario, but ultimately it is difficult to predict the ongoing dynamics that could get in the way of fellows effectively connecting with community members before they start the fellowship. This is why hosting the fellows at organizations that are trusted voices in the community was so important, many times it helped smooth over potential conflict and gave the fellow some credibility in the community, as well as some education about the community.

...hosting the fellows at organizations that are trusted voices in the community was so important...

One fellow cited her struggles with breaking up neighborhoods in her mapping efforts but found community input helpful. For example, a community member pointed out which neighborhoods were historically or naturally paired together because of existing community dynamics of which the fellow was unaware because she had never engaged with that neighborhood before. This can be cited as a success for the relationships between fellows and their community partners where a partner can bolster the fellow's work while teaching them about the community.

3. Lack of organizing experience, such as organizing community events and public speaking.

Future training on "soft skills", such as meeting management and public speaking, could support fellows' success with these issues. Some host organizations also suggested that a longer timeframe for training could be helpful in general. This could be paired with more training on organizing events, public speaking, the history of redistricting, and helpful context overall for fellows before starting this program. A potential avenue for this supplemental training could be the addition of an organizing mentor when necessary. Some host organizations were able to provide training on these "soft skills" which were incredibly helpful to fellows, but more of a focus on this training may be helpful in states where there is a large focus on base-building, such as South Carolina.

One of CROWD's major goals was to build capacity around redistricting in communities. Between fellows and CROWD generally, there was relative success in this area. Fellows often referenced their hopes for sustainable growth in their community's level of awareness, education, and advocacy. Many fellows

did not see the immediate change or legislative wins they originally hoped for. However, they often shifted focus away from those setbacks and onto the longevity of this type of advocacy.

“

There were people out there advocating for themselves and for the community and that was one of the top priorities. Even if we couldn't make actual change, people were educated and advocated for. People moved. Even if we didn't have maps that were passed, they could learn more and kind of rattle some cages.”



Because many fellows shared an interest in continuing redistricting work after the completion of their fellowship, one host organization's suggestion might help sustain that effort through collaboration and information sharing:

“

...devise a communication model that maintains quarterly or annual emotional touchpoint with the CROWD Alumni, then I think you can build an identity and community that might be broad enough to hold the diversity of interests, personalities, and ideologies over the long term, as people - particularly young people - continue to change.”



Ultimately, the CROWD program and CROWD fellowship have charted a path for sustainable growth and sustainable impact. As the SERVE survey found:

“

Host organizations/state partners all agreed that the CROWD Fellowship has mobilized people around redistricting, and they believe that this will impact long-term advocacy in the South; one host organization/state partner projected that if the program continues in its current form, it “will be able to look back and see a connection to at least 25% of the emerging civic leaders in Black, Latinx, AAPI, and other communities in the Deep South.”





CONCLUSION

The CROWD fellowship program was successful in tandem with the resounding success of the overall CROWD initiative. Communities in the South now have trained voices in their ranks that have information about redistricting that will assist those communities in their advocacy and in continuing the fight for fair and equitable maps. Although redistricting is completed in many states, there are several states in the south whose maps have been challenged and those cases will be litigated over the next two years. The CROWD fellows remain an important resource for these communities

and it is our hope that the advocacy infrastructure, relationships that were created, and the energy around advocating for better maps continue to drive change forward. SCSJ's goal in creating the CROWD program and CROWD fellowship was always to build long-lasting organizing and advocacy infrastructure so that communities could continue to push for change with respect to the various issues that may affect them. We believe that the infrastructure that our CROWD fellows have helped build will be long lasting and will lead to breakthroughs in other areas of the community.



If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far,
GO TOGETHER.





APPENDIX A

List of CROWD Fellows

STATE	HOST ORGANIZATION	FELLOW NAME
North Carolina	Men and Women United for Youth & Families	Keith Graham
North Carolina	Community Ventures, Inc.	Chanelle James
North Carolina	NAACP-Pasquotank County	Keisha Dobie
Tennessee	Civic Tennessee	Timothy Hughes
Tennessee	Memphis A.P.R.I.	Kendra Lee
Tennessee	Unifi-ED	Michaela Winters
Alabama	Alabama Forward	Khadidah Stone
Alabama	The Ordinary People Society (TOPS)	Zephyr Scalzetti
Alabama	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Mobile	Shalela Dowdy
Alabama	League of Women Voters (LWV) Alabama	Stephanie Barnett
Louisiana	Louisiana Power Coalition for Equity and Justice	Carlos Pollard
Louisiana	Louisiana Power Coalition for Equity and Justice	Lisa Tomkies
Louisiana	Louisiana Power Coalition for Equity and Justice	Carlton Jones
South Carolina	South Carolina Appleseed	Bridget Deline
South Carolina	South Carolina Appleseed	Charles Mann
South Carolina	South Carolina Appleseed	Lindy Studds
Texas	League of Women Voters Texas	Bindu Jose
Texas	Texas NAACP	Roxy D. Hall Williamson
Georgia	ProGeorgia	Ayesha Abid
Georgia	ProGeorgia	Jada Thomas
Georgia	ProGeorgia	Gabriel Sanchez
Georgia	ProGeorgia	Josue Acosta
Mississippi	Southern Echo	Melvin Young
Mississippi	Southern Echo	Kathy Sykes
Mississippi	Southern Echo	Stephanie Coleman



APPENDIX B

CROWD Fellowship Evaluation Memo by SERVE Center at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

See the following 21 pages.



Southern Coalition for Social Justice: CROWD Fellowship Evaluation Memo

Draft Memo Submitted to:

R. Jordan Davis and Avery Walter (June 2023)

Final Memo Submitted to:

Mitchell D. Brown and Jeff Loperfido (September 2023)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CROWD Fellowship Evaluation	3
Southern Coalition for Social Justice	3
CROWD Academy Initiative and Fellowship	3
CROWD Partner Data Collection	3
Host Organization/State Partner Perceptions	4
Respondent Characteristics	4
Familiarity of Goals	5
Alignment of Goals	6
Mentoring Preparation	7
Supporting Fellows	8
Impact on Fellows	10
Participant Reflections	13

Appendix A: SCSJ State Partner and Host Organization Survey

Appendix B: SCSJ Host Organization and State Partner Focus Group/Interview Protocol

CROWD FELLOWSHIP EVALUATION

Southern Coalition for Social Justice

Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 in Durham, North Carolina. SCSJ's mission is to partner with communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities in the South to defend and advance their political, social, and economic rights through the combination of legal advocacy, research, organizing, and communications. SCSJ's goals are to:

- Provide the highest quality legal advice and representation to poor communities of color engaged in social change efforts.
- Bring the best social science research (whether litigation or policy-related), communication strategies, and community organizing skills to serve community priorities.
- Have substantive priorities that are community-determined.
- Build coalitions across community lawyering organizations in the South and between national organizations and local community groups.

CROWD Academy Initiative and Fellowship

SCSJ partnered with community organizations in several states across the Southeast to offer in-depth training sessions to educate community organizers on the redistricting process and potential voting rights violations following the 2020 census. The **Community Redistricting Organizations Working for Democracy** (CROWD) Academies were designed to equip individuals and organizations with tools to monitor and engage in redistricting processes at every level of government, spot warning signs, and take action if mapping decisions were likely to infringe on the right to an equal opportunity to participate in elections. In 2020, a total of 25 CROWD Academy participants were selected as fellows, paired with local host organizations, and trained on map-drawing and analysis in their local communities.

CROWD Partner Data Collection

SCSJ contracted with SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to provide evaluation services focused on collecting data from host organizations and state partners to (a) better understand the experiences of the CROWD Fellowship partners and (b) identify lessons learned to inform the CROWD Fellowship initiative's planning and continual growth efforts. Data collection for this project included a host organization/state partner survey (see Appendix A for survey items) and focus groups/interviews (see Appendix B for protocol).

HOST ORGANIZATION/STATE PARTNER PERCEPTIONS

Respondent Characteristics

Surveys were distributed to 18 unique host organizations/state partners (10 host organizations and 8 state partners). Ten surveys from across five states were completed (response rate 56%). Characteristics of host organizations/state partners who responded to the survey are presented in Table 1. The majority of host organizations/state partners were micro or small organizations (n= 8, 80%) and had been an advocacy organization for 10 or more years (n= 7, 70%).

Table 1. Host organization/state partner characteristics

Characteristic	n	%
Organization size		
Micro (1 - 9 employees)	6	60%
Small (10 - 49 employees)	2	20%
Medium (50 - 100 employees)	0	0%
Large (over 101 employees)	2	20%
Years as advocacy organization		
0 - 3 years	2	20%
4 - 9 years	1	10%
10 or more years	7	70%

If the program continues in its current form, it “will be able to look back and see a connection to at least 25% of the emerging civic leaders in Black, Latinx, AAPI, and other communities in the Deep South.”

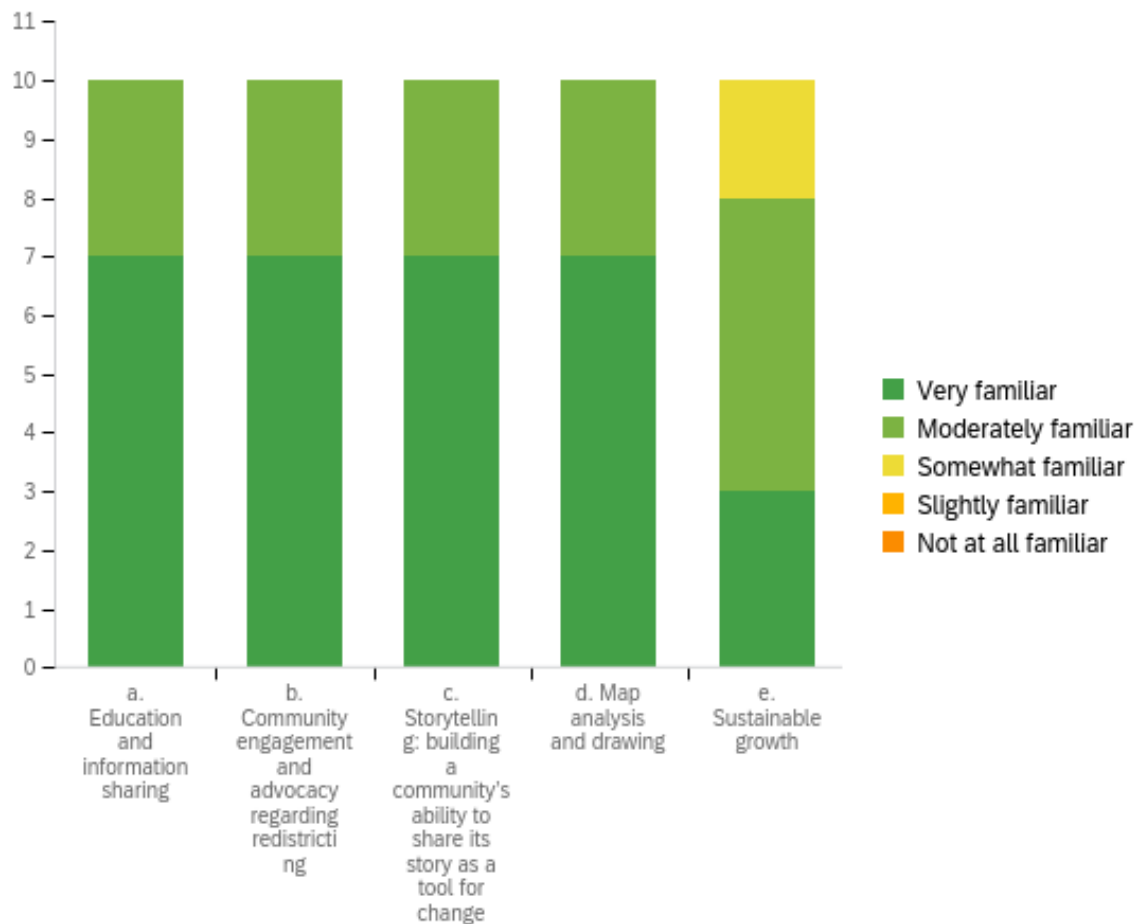
Familiarity of Goals

The CROWD Fellowship had the following five primary goals:

- 1) Education and information sharing
- 2) Community engagement and advocacy
- 3) Storytelling: building a community's ability to share its story as a tool for change
- 4) Map analysis and drawing
- 5) Sustainable growth

Host organizations/state partners were all either moderately familiar or very familiar with the first four goals as shown in Figure 1. Two respondents were only somewhat familiar with the sustainable growth goal.

Figure 1. Host organization/state partners familiarity with CROWD Fellowship goals

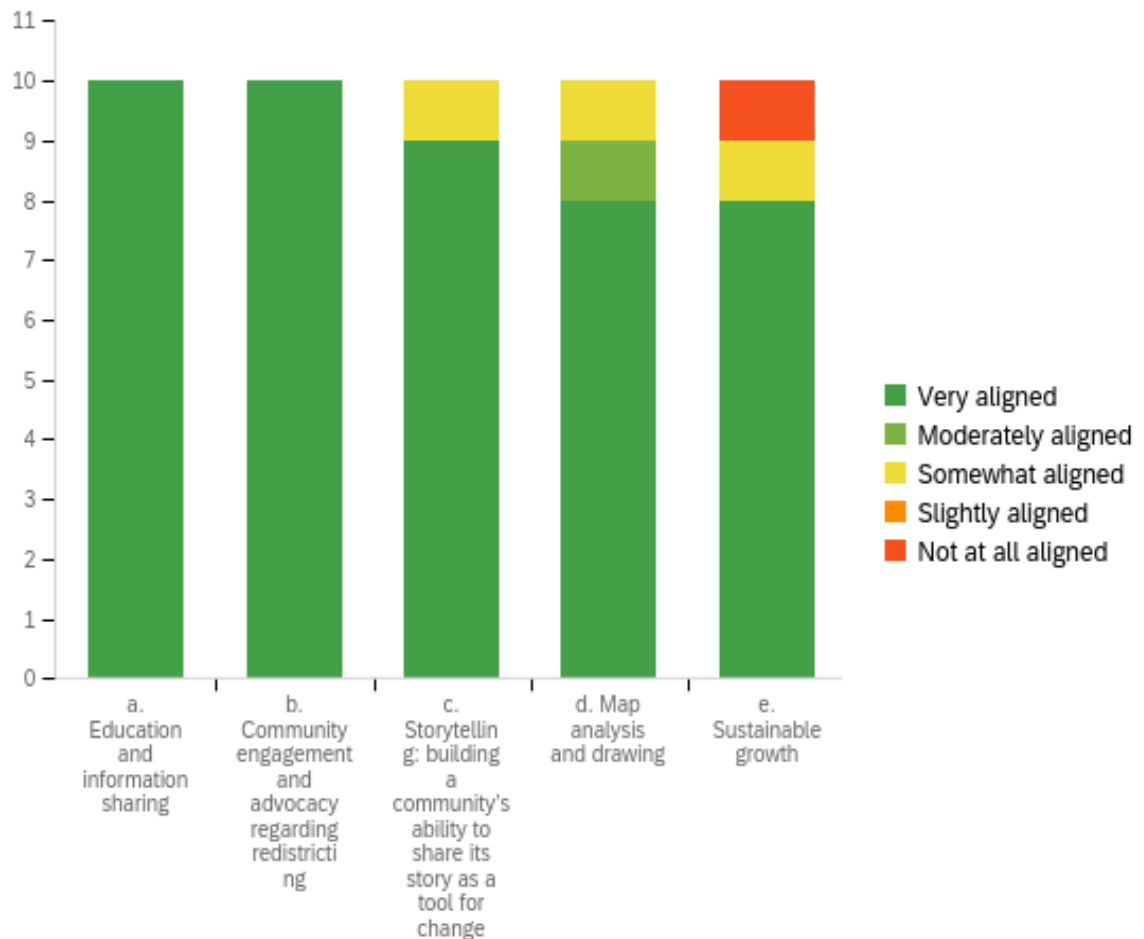


Alignment of Goals

The fellows are expected to work with their host organization/state partner to incorporate the organization's goals into their outreach plan.

All respondents found their organizations goals to be very aligned with the CROWD Fellowship's (a) education and information sharing and (b) community engagement and advocacy regarding redistricting goals. Host organizations'/state partners' goals were at least somewhat aligned with the CROWD Fellowship's (c) storytelling, (d) map analysis and drawing goals, and (e) sustainable growth goals (with the exception of one host organization respondent who indicated there was no alignment with the CROWD goal of sustainable growth and their organization's goals).

Figure 2. Alignment of host organization/state partners with CROWD Fellowship goals

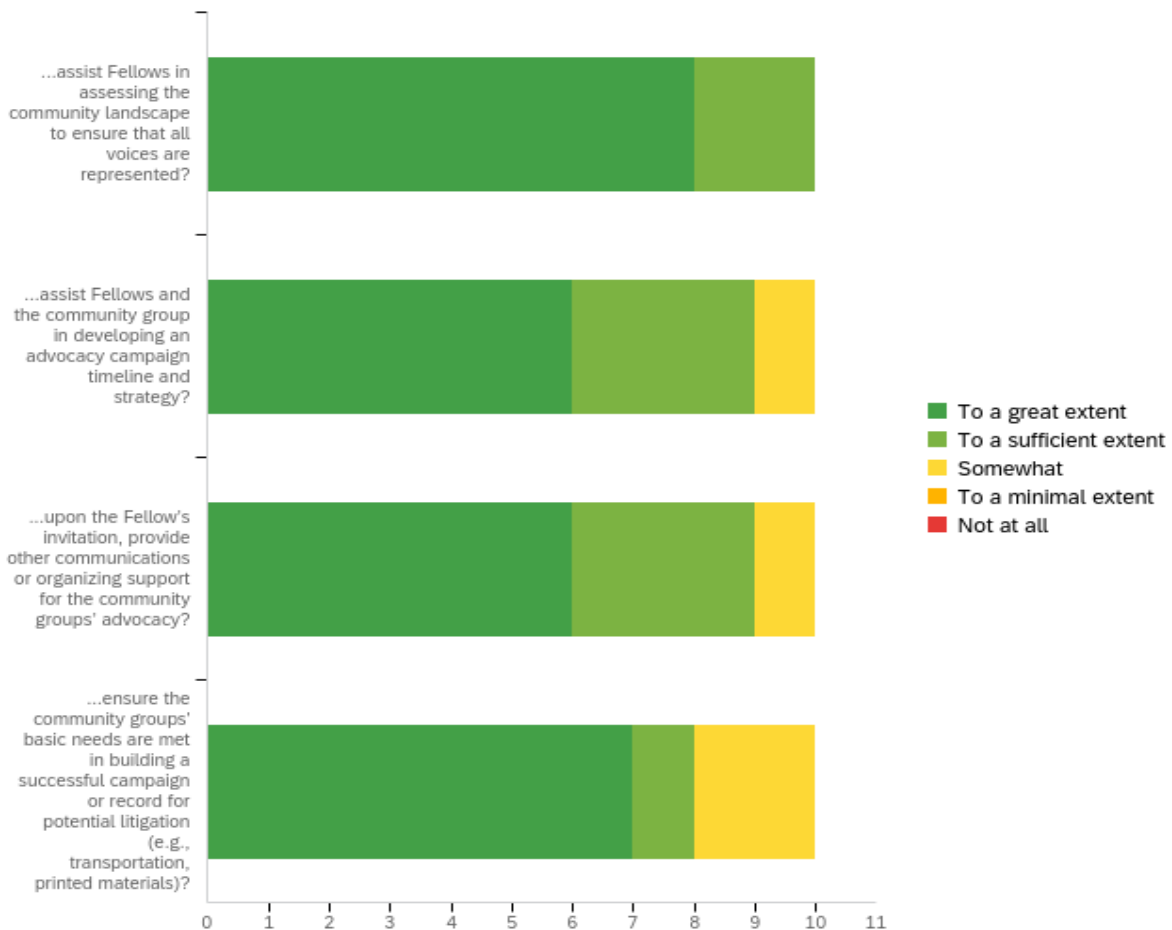


Mentoring Preparation

SCSJ provided a handbook for host organizations and an orientation session. When asked to reflect on the training/preparation they received from SCSJ to support mentoring their fellow(s):

- All respondents reported having received clear information about their role in the CROWD Fellowship program to assist fellows in assessing the community landscape.
- All but one respondent reported receiving clear information on their role (a) to assist fellows with an advocacy campaign and (b) to provide communication and organization support when requested by the fellows.
- All but two respondents reported receiving clear information on how to ensure the community groups' basic needs were being met in building a successful campaign or record for potential litigation (e.g., transportation, printed materials).

Figure 3. Clear information on the role of host organizations/state partners



Supporting Fellows

Host organizations/state partners supplemented the training and onboarding provided to the CROWD Fellows by SCSJ in various ways. Examples provided by respondents included (a) procuring additional formal Maptitude training, (b) providing informal opportunities to get more familiar with mapping software [DistrictR], (c) providing additional intensive “Redistricting 101” sessions, and (d) sponsoring attendance to state and regional classes/conferences within the organization. Host organizations/state partners also provided fellows access to additional local and national expertise/resources (e.g., attorneys, mapmaking experts).

SCSJ outlined the following six activities for fellows:

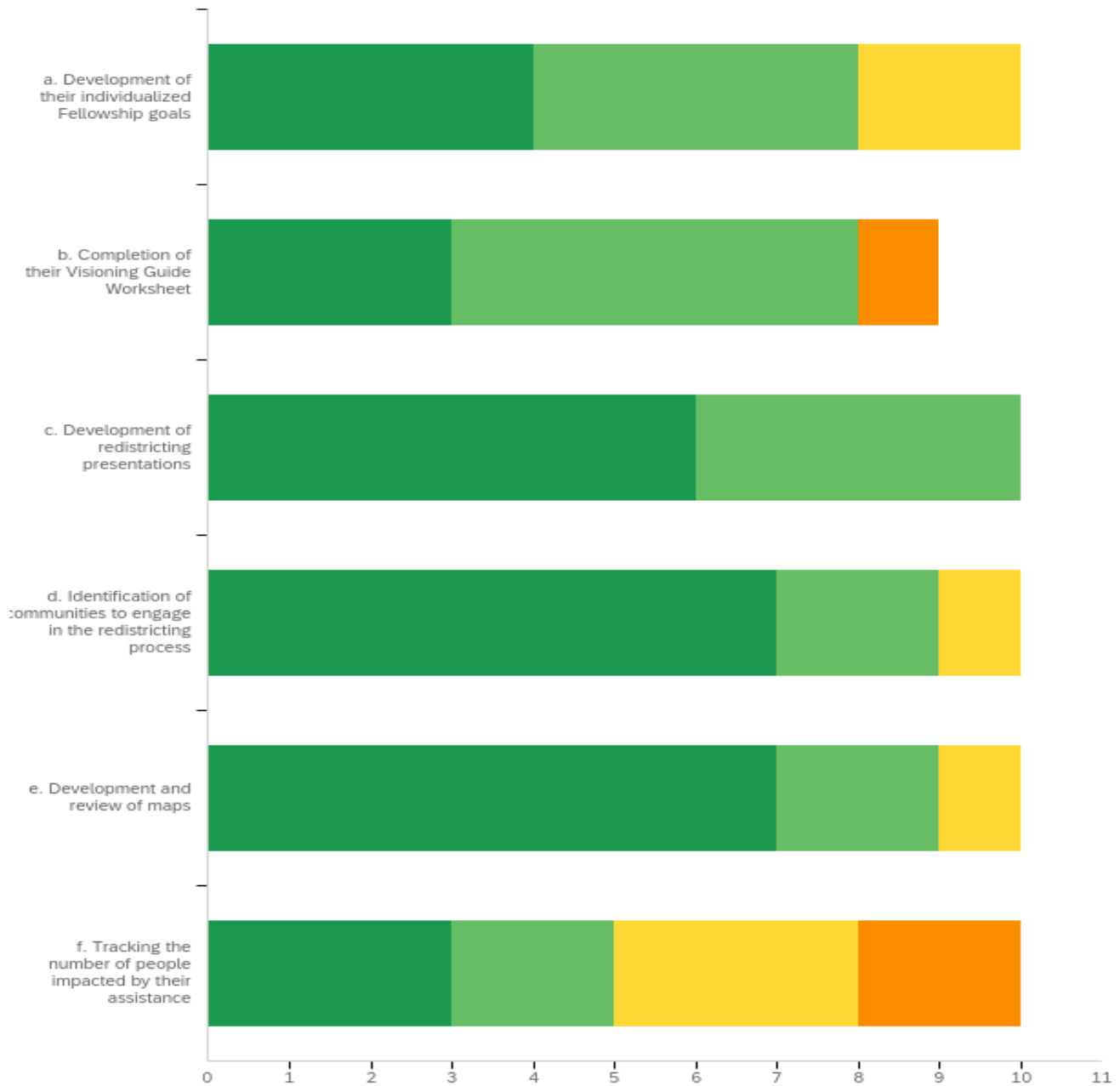
- 1) Development of individualized fellowship goals
- 2) Completion of a Visioning Guide Worksheet
- 3) Development of redistricting presentation
- 4) Identification of communities to engage in the redistricting process
- 5) Development and review of maps
- 6) Tracking the number of people impacted by their assistance

Host organizations/state partners were asked about the extent to which they were able to provide support to the fellows in each of these activities. Figure 4 shows the responses received from host organizations/state partners. Of the six CROWD Fellowship action-step activities listed above, two respondents found the development of individualized fellowship goals as most beneficial. One host organization/state partner said it “helped to build relationships, increase understanding of motivation, and create a clear path for success.” Another host organization went on to explain “every community is different, but this goal development helped to better match what we do as an organization with redistricting.”

Development of redistricting presentations was also highlighted as beneficial by two host organizations. One fellow utilized this presentation to facilitate interviews in the process of identifying communities to engage in the redistricting process. Another respondent indicated their fellow “was able to help facilitate and present at multiple redistricting presentations throughout the city and engage citizens in the importance knowing about and participating in the redistricting conversation. Related to this, another host organization shared that their fellows were heavily involved in a state “road show” where presentations were shared. One such presentation was shared at a state legislature hearing.

The development and review of maps was also highlighted as the most beneficial action-step activity by two host organizations/state partners, which “empowered and leveled the playing field for our community.” In one case, the fellows’ review of maps led to their inclusion as a plaintiff in a lawsuit.

Figure 4. Support provided to CROWD Fellows for action-step activities



Additional Tools/Resources for Fellows

Host organizations/state partners outlined several additional tools/resources that would have been beneficial to better support the fellows. Some were technical resources relating to the mapmaking software, others related to training, while others were related to structural aspects of the program.

Technical. Some host organizations/state partners felt the fellows needed more technical support with Maptitude as feedback was slow to come when fellows requested support. One host organization/state partner said fellows needed more time to get familiar with the software. Another host organization highlighted that Maptitude did not have all the data the fellow needed built into the system.

Training. One host organization/state partner noted that training of their advocates about the program, including a primer on redistricting, was an additional resource that would have benefitted the fellow(s). Training on soft skills such as list building, meeting management, asset mapping, and community organizing was also highlighted as a need for fellows. More specifically, the need for resources to increase fellows' awareness of "best practices when conducting field training/presentations." In addition, one host organization/state partner suggested that fellows needed a better understanding of Civil Rights history and the history/legal aspects of redistricting.

Structural. Some host organizations reported the fellowship timeframe was too short and the program needed an extended timeframe. For example, several host organizations/state partners suggested having the fellowships start at least a year or two before the election/census. Additional suggestions included a need for more structural supports such as definitive contracts that stipulate deliverables and mechanisms to track hours (i.e., timesheets). Furthermore, one host organization/state partner suggested SCSJ create a pre- and post-assessment tool that could measure fellows' incoming skills before and after the fellowship.

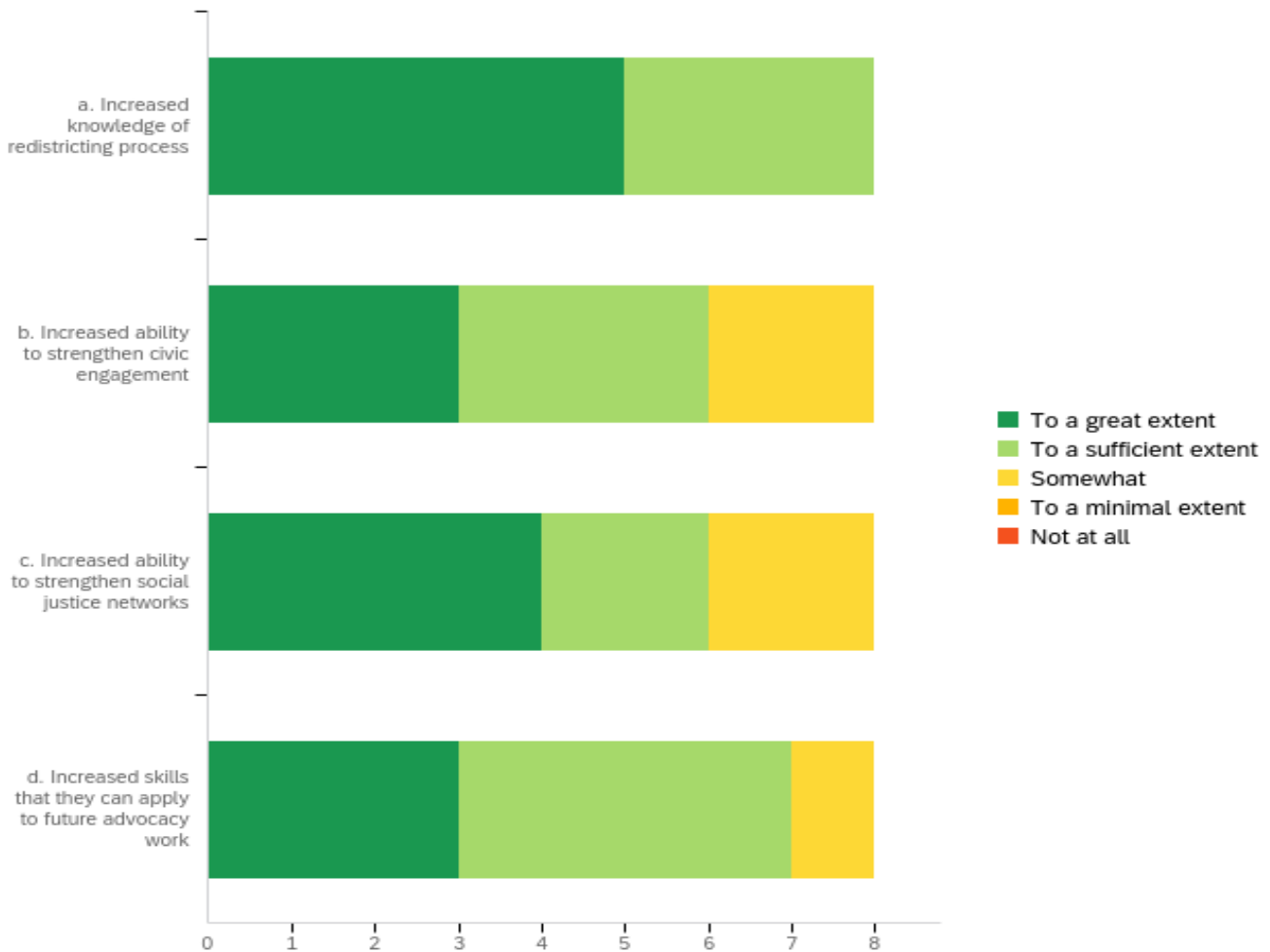
Impact on Fellows

Host organizations/state partners were asked about the extent to which their organization had an impact on fellows' (a) knowledge of the redistricting process, (b) ability to strengthen civic engagement, (c) ability to strengthen social justice networks, and (d) skills they can apply to future advocacy work.

Host organizations/state partners indicated their organization had an overall positive impact on fellows' knowledge, skills and/or abilities (see Figure 5 below). More specifically:

- All respondents reported an increase in the fellows' knowledge of the redistricting process.
- All but one reported an increase in the fellows' advocacy skills.
- All but two reported an increase in the fellows' ability to strengthen civic engagement and social justice networks.

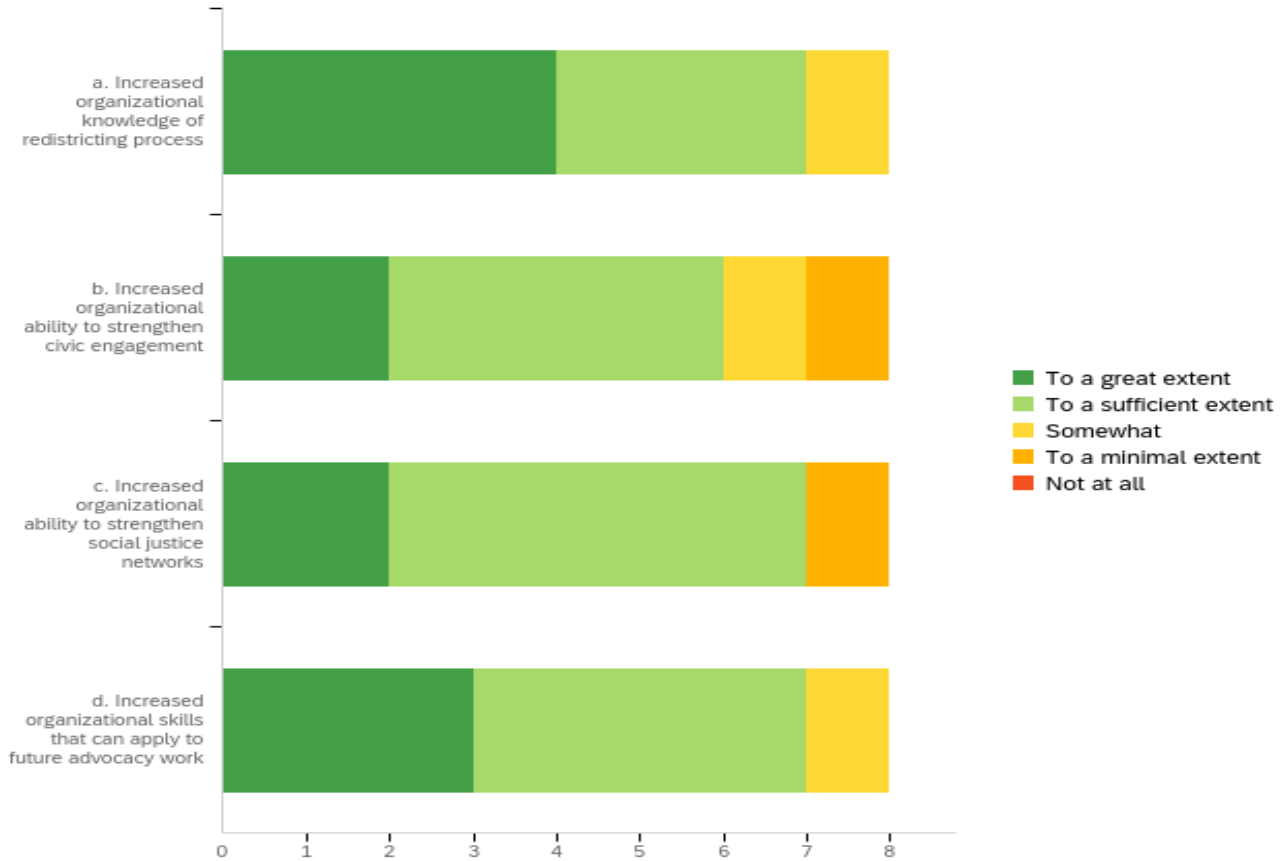
Figure 5. Host organizations/state partners positive impact on various knowledge, skills and/or abilities of the CROWD Fellow(s)



Impact on Host Organizations/State Partners

Host organizations/state partners were also asked about the extent to which the fellow(s) impacted their organizations. Figure 6 shows the host organization/state partner responses. Fellows had at least some impact on host organization/state partners' knowledge of the redistricting process and skills that apply to future advocacy work (a and d). However, one host organization/state partner reported their fellow(s) had only a minimal impact on their organizational ability to strengthen civic engagement and social justice networks (b and c).

Figure 6. CROWD Fellow(s) positive impact on various knowledge and skills of the host organizations/state partners



Host organizations/state partners all agreed that the CROWD Fellowship has mobilized people around redistricting, and they believe that this will impact long-term advocacy in the South; one host organization/state partner projected that if the program continues in its current form, it “will be able to look back and see a connection to at least 25% of the emerging civic leaders in Black, Latinx, AAPI, and other communities in the Deep South.”

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

Future Participation

Seven out of eight (88%) host organization/state partner representatives said they were very likely to participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again. One respondent stated, “If we are invited, this is a no brainer. We were lucky to have a fellow with special attributes that you trained well. We still have many areas suffering from serious local racial gerrymanders.” Similarly, another respondent stated, “The fight has just begun. It would be great to be able to put another fellow in place to continue with the groundwork already laid.” However, one host organization/state partner (17%) was not sure if their organization would participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again due to high staff turnover in their organization as “these decisions may be out of [their] hands next round.”

Suggested Changes

When asked about suggestions for the initiative, host organizations/state partners provided the following responses:

- Expand the training provided to the fellows in the CROWD Fellowship Academy to increase the number/quality of potential fellows.
- Increase wages for fellows.
- Facilitate opportunities for host organizations/state partners to share experiences and lessons learned.
- Identify formalized ways to sustain the CROWD Fellowship program efforts. For example,

“...devise a communication model that maintains quarterly or annual emotional touchpoint with the CROWD Alumni, then I think you can build an identity and community that might be broad enough to hold the diversity of interests, personalities, and ideologies over the long term, as people - particularly young people - continue to change.”

“...draw more leaders into the framework, so this effort can be expanded upon and passed down to new volunteers.”

Best Aspects

Most host organization/state partner representatives highlighted networking with likeminded individuals across the South around redistricting as the best aspect of the program, specifically, the community the CROWD Fellowship program was able to create. Having trained map drawers on the ground was also considered one of the best aspects of the program. Other aspects highlighted were the curriculum and training provided to the fellows and the model and methods for community organizing.

In addition, accolades regarding the CROWD Fellowship program, as a whole, were provided. For example, one host organization/state partner stated,

“I believe opportunities like this are the heart of why we are involved. The ability to get support in a collective effort to raise awareness on such an important issue is amazing. I don’t know that we would have had the progress we have had without the support of the fellows across the state.”

“The fight has just begun. It would be great to be able to put another fellow in place to continue the groundwork already laid.”

APPENDIX A

SCSJ State Partner and Host Organization Survey

You are participating in an evaluation that will increase the knowledge on the implementation of the CROWD Fellowship and general knowledge on the effectiveness of social justice mentoring efforts. If you have any questions or concerns after completing this survey, you can contact Megan Orleans, at 608-658-0586 or morleans@serve.org

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Background

In what state is your organization?

- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Other

What size is your organization?

- Micro = 1 – 9 employees
- Small = 10 – 49 employees
- Medium = 50 – 100 employees
- Large = over 101 or more employees

How many years have you been an advocacy organization?

- 0 – 3 years
- 4 – 9 years
- 10 or more years

What was your primary mode of mentoring with the CROWD Fellows?

[select the mode most used with mentee(s)]

- One-to-one: one Fellow matched with one mentor
- Group: one Fellow matched with up to four mentors/staff
- Large group: one Fellow matched with more than four mentors/staff
- Team: multiple Fellows matched with multiple mentors/staff

Primary Goals

To what extent are you **familiar** with the CROWD Fellowship Goals listed below?

	Very familiar	Moderately familiar	Somewhat familiar	Slightly familiar	Not at all familiar
a. Education and information sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Community engagement and advocacy regarding redistricting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Storytelling: building a community's ability to share its story as a tool for change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Map analysis and drawing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Sustainable growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

To what extent are each of the CROWD Fellowship Goals **aligned** with your organizational goals?

	Very aligned	Moderately aligned	Somewhat aligned	Slightly aligned	Not at all aligned
a. Education and information sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Community engagement and advocacy regarding redistricting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Storytelling: building a community's ability to share its story as a tool for change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Map analysis and drawing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Sustainable growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Mentoring Preparation

To what extent were you given clear information about your role from the CROWD Fellowship program to...

	To a great extent	To a sufficient extent	Somewhat	To a minimal extent	Not at all
...assist Fellows in assessing the community landscape to ensure that all voices are represented?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...assist Fellows and the community group in developing an advocacy campaign timeline and strategy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...upon the Fellow's invitation, provide other communications or organizing support for the community groups' advocacy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...ensure the community groups' basic needs are met in building a successful campaign or record for potential litigation (e.g., transportation, printed materials)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Supporting Fellows

To what extent were you able to provide support to the CROWD Fellows regarding the following action-step activities?

	To a great extent	To a sufficient extent	Somewhat	To a minimal extent	Not at all
a. Development of their individualized Fellowship goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Completion of their Visioning Guide Worksheet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Development of redistricting presentations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Identification of communities to engage in the redistricting process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Development and review of maps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Tracking the number of people impacted by their assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Identify one of the CROWD Fellows action-step activities above (a-f) and describe how the completion of that action-step was impactful to your organization's work.

What additional training and onboarding did you provide the CROWD Fellows?

In hindsight, what additional tools/resources would have beneficial to better support the CROWD Fellow(s)?

Impact

From your perspective to what extent did working with your organization have a positive impact on the various knowledge, skills, and/or abilities **of the Fellow(s)** listed below?

	To a great extent	To a sufficient extent	Somewhat	To a minimal extent	Not at all
a. Increased organizational knowledge of redistricting process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Increased organizational ability to strengthen civic engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Increased organizational ability to strengthen social justice networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Increased organizational skills that can apply to future advocacy work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From your perspective to what extent did the CROWD fellowship have a positive impact on the knowledge and skills of your organization?

	To a great extent	To a sufficient extent	Somewhat	To a minimal extent	Not at all
a. Increased organizational knowledge of redistricting process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Increased organizational ability to strengthen civic engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Increased organizational ability to strengthen social justice networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Increased organizational skills that can apply to future advocacy work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Broader Impact

As implemented, how do you expect the CROWD Fellowship program will impact long-term advocacy and organizing in the South?

Overall, how would you rate your overall experience as a State partner/host organization?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

Please elaborate regarding your level of satisfaction with being a State partner/host organization.

How likely is it that you will participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not sure
- Unlikely
- Not at all likely

How likely is it that your organization will participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not sure
- Unlikely
- Not at all likely

Please elaborate regarding your likeliness to participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again.

Please elaborate regarding your organization's likeliness to participate in the CROWD Fellowship program again.

Lessons Learned

In your opinion, what was/were the best aspect(s) of the CROWD Fellowship program?

What changes would you suggest to improve future iterations of the CROWD Fellowship program?

APPENDIX B

SCSJ Host Organization and State Partner Focus Group/Interview Protocol

Participants' Names:

Date of Focus Groups:

Start Time:

End Time:

Facilitators' Names:

*This focus group is part of an evaluation of the SCSJ Community Redistricting Organizations Working for Democracy (CROWD) fellowship program. We are interested in understanding how the program was implemented and what lessons you have learned to support its continued growth. During this session, we will ask about your experiences as a **Host Organization** and/or **State Partner**. For purposes of this conversation, we want to focus only your experiences with the fellowship program.*

This focus group should take about 45 minutes to 1 hour. With your permission, we will record this focus group as it allows us to capture the important information much better.

Are you alright with this focus group being recorded?

Do you have any questions about the evaluation or this interview before we start? [Start recording]

Interviewer: Once again, my name is _____ and I am _____. It is _____ (date).

Introduction – Basic Organization Information (only round robin question)

1. Please introduce yourself by telling us:
 - a. your name,
 - b. how long you have worked in the redistricting advocacy field,
 - c. how long have you been partnering with SCSJ?

[SERVE will de-identify this information when reporting.]

CROWD Fellows Purpose

The CROWD Academy initiative was established in 2020 to educate citizens about the redistricting process and equip them with the tools to engage in the process meaningfully. In support of this, 25 Academy participants were selected to serve as year-long CROWD fellows, and they were paired with a local host organization and received additional training and support to provide map drawing and analysis services in their communities.

2. How would **you** describe the purpose of the CROWD fellowship program?
 - a. How well did your organization help to meet those purpose(s)? Probe for: training, mentoring around advocacy, storytelling, & equipment.
3. Have you ever participated in similar fellowship programs? What were the similarities? Differences?

Fellows Goals

The CROWD Fellows Goals are: Education and information sharing; Community engagement and advocacy; Storytelling; Map analysis and drawing; and Sustainable growth.

4. Was the **program** successful in equipping CROWD Fellows with the training and tools needed to mobilize their communities around redistricting?
 - a. If not, why not? What could have been done differently?
5. Were CROWD Fellows able to meet their **fellowship goals**, especially related to gaining knowledge and mobilizing communities around redistricting? What challenges did they encounter in their efforts to educate and mobilize their communities around redistricting?
 - a. To what extent did you monitor the fellows task milestones?
 - b. What additional supports would be beneficial in helping the CROWD fellows meet community needs?

Alignment with the CROWD Academy/Fellowship

The next few questions ask how your organization became involved in the CROWD Academy and thus the Fellows Program.

6. Why did your organization become affiliated with the CROWD Academy fellows' program?
 - a. Has there been added value to your organization as a result of being a state partner/host organization? Please describe why (or not).
7. To what extent was your organization impacted by supporting this initiative?
 - a. If it was not impacted, why not?
 - b. If given the opportunity, would you do anything differently?

Impact

8. To what extent do you think the CROWD fellow program will have an impact on long-term advocacy and organizing in the South?

Lessons Learned

9. What lessons have **you** learned from being a **SCSJ Partner**? *Probe for:*
 - a. Preparation for role as state partner and/or host organization?
 - b. Fellowship implementation and management?
 - i. Continuous improvement?
 - c. Developing collaborations and/or partnerships with community organizations?
 - d. Maintaining positive collaborative relationships?
 - e. Sustainability for these types of initiatives?
10. Reflecting over the course of the year, what *recommendations* do you have for improving the CROWD fellows' program?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.



APPENDIX C

SCSJ Interview Guide for CROWD Fellows

- 1** How successful do you feel you were in reaching your fellowship goals?

- 2** What challenges did you encounter?

- 3** What did the goal-setting and tracking process look like with your host organization?
 - a.** How did the SCSJ metrics of success worksheet inform this process?
 - b.** How could goal setting and reporting have been made easier for fellows?_____
- 4** How did the technical training that you received through this fellowship help you reach your goals?

- 5** Out of the software you were trained on, did you find yourself using one more than the other? What made the difference?

- 6** Tell us about a fellowship experience, interaction, or project that you are most proud of.
 - a.** How did your technical skills impact this?_____
- 7** Tell us about a challenging experience and what resources or support could have made this easier.

- 8** What did you learn by the end of the fellowship that you wish you had known at the beginning?

- 9** What skills or lessons will you take from this fellowship into future work?

- 10** Anything else that you would like to share?
