



Impact Report

20

23



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

IMPACT SUMMARY

The College of Social Work Democracy Fellowship is a student led experience to conduct nonpartisan voter engagement by leveraging relationships with agency partners. Building on the National Social Work Voter Mobilization campaign, the Democracy Fellowship provided structured support and compensation to facilitate student engagement in democracy.

5

Fellows hired in pilot year

528

Voter Registrations Checked

24

**One-to-one Meetings with
Community Partners**

74

Agency Staff Engaged

18

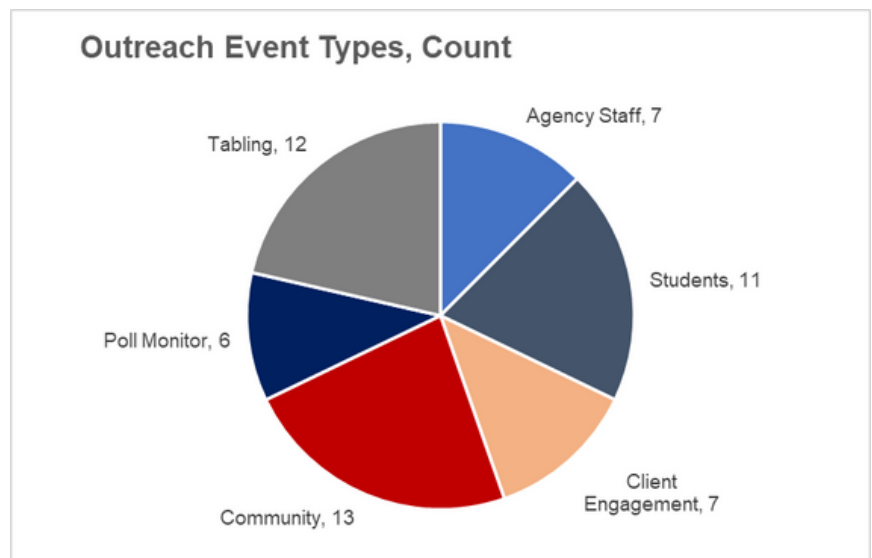
Direct Client Engagements

10

**Week Program with Structured
Resources + Supervision**

56

**Events and Voter Outreach
Interventions**



“Having deep conversations with people who I assume would be turned off by the topic of politics and voting, and seeing their reaction that has been really positive and open, I think has given me hope for the future, as divided as our country seems sometimes.”

-Kristen

FELLOWS OVERVIEW

The Democracy Fellowship pilot was open to CSW students across ranks residing in Ohio. By engaging with their placement sites and local communities, the fellows were able to reach populations that face historical and contemporary barriers to political participation. Students reported personal growth and leadership development through engagement in this process.

TONI BROWN

MSW Student, Marietta, Washington County

Hopewell Health Center

Populations: direct client engagement with people in recovery, experiencing homelessness, older adults, agency staff

“I spoke to my individual clients about how voting can help them achieve their goals. We are very rural down here and some of the barriers to voting are a bit different.”

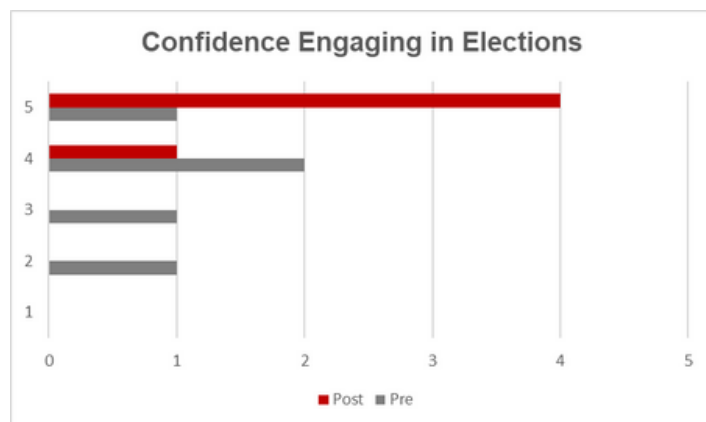
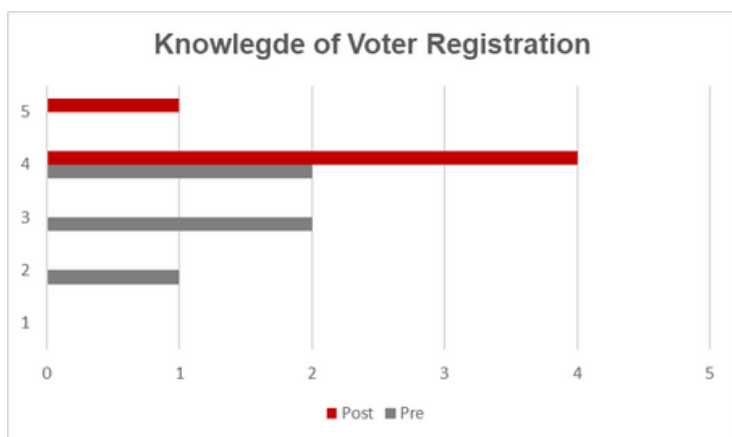
BRINA COLLINS

BSSW Student, Whitehall, Franklin County

Columbus Metropolitan Library

Population: contacts with general public through library-based outreach, OSU students

“I am most excited to get people engaged in voting and the political process.”



FELLOWS OVERVIEW

KRISTEN GRAVITT

MSW Student, Xenia, Greene County

Her Story Inc.

Populations: voter education for people in recovery, intensive inpatient treatment program, agency staff

“She had felt disenfranchised, and being able to share that she still had a place at the table of democracy made a difference for her and impacted me as well.”

KRISTA SMITH

MSW/PhD Student, Columbus, Franklin County

Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS)

Populations: Students on OSU campus and Columbus refugees

“First, it’s okay not to know. And let’s learn together.”

NICOLE TREXLER

MSW Student, Fairborn, Green County

TCN Behavioral Health

Populations: people in recovery, experiencing homelessness and incarcerated

“Voting is a complex issue, and what better profession to tackle complexity than social work.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Incorporate student feedback to improve the fellowship experience

- Start the program earlier for a longer orientation period
- Increase clarity around contact tracking
- Create additional opportunities for online students to connect to CSW events

Improve Data Collection

- Identification and deploy established voter engagement tools (apps / software / tracking)
- Work with local and national civic engagement organizations to identify and deploy these tools

Secure External Funding

- Ensure sustainability of the program
- Scale to add additional fellows

"I feel more connected to the college, to the community, and to myself."

-Nicole

GRATITUDE + ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful for the chance to work with these incredible students at a time of great consequence in the history of our democracy. I was constantly surprised by their brilliance and bravery diving into this work.

The 2023 election in Ohio held issues of national relevance alongside deep local impact. I am thankful to these student for having grounded conversations with people whose voices are excluded from our political system. They showed the power of social work to change people and change the conditions around them.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment and support of Dean David Jenkins and Assistant Dean for Community Engagement Lisa Durham. They believe in social work's ethical obligation to advocacy and have dedicated the resources and attention to make this program come to life.

We can make our democracy work for everyone. I hope you will continue to join us in this work.

Steve David, LSW
Advocacy Director
Ohio State University College of Social Work



**Watch our Fellows
Testimonial Videos
at [go.osu.edu/
democracymfellows](https://go.osu.edu/democracymfellows)**