



Evergreen Future City Builders Program Evaluation Results Report

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GOOD 
ROOTS

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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RESULTS SUMMARY

Good Roots Consulting supported Evergreen to complete an evaluation of the virtual delivery of the Future City Builders program. The purpose of the evaluation was to facilitate learning that can be applied to future program delivery at Evergreen, and to generate broader recommendations to share with funders and policymakers about supporting youth to make change in their communities and to overcome barriers to the workforce.

Evaluation results are based on an analysis of existing data collected by Evergreen from a variety of program stakeholders, as well as new information collected through interviews and group reflection sessions.

KEY THEMES

Here are 10 key themes that emerged from the results of the collective evaluation activities:

- 1 There are many aspects of Future City Builders that are worth carrying forward** as a continuation of the program or as part of other programs.
- 2 Youth ages 18 and 29 are an important demographic for Evergreen to engage.** They are poised to become the next leaders in building healthy cities and are not currently targeted by other Evergreen programs.
- 3 Shifting away from a competitive focus** could strengthen the program experience. More emphasis could be placed on knowledge sharing and cooperation, including by further supporting participants with team building and conflict resolution.
- 4 Networking and teamwork skills are key outcomes of the program.** If Future City Builders continues, find ways to strengthen connections across teams and between community connectors and participants.
- 5 Design thinking and systems thinking skills and experience are valued** by participants and employers because they encourage different ways to think about and address issues. It is important to strike a balance between theory and practice.
- 6 Lots of other skills were gained** too, especially community engagement, interview skills, and presentation skills.
- 7 Plan for drop-outs** and consider how this impacts team dynamics. Look for ways to remove barriers to participation (e.g. avoid conflicts with university schedules and jobs, provide more accessibility grants, ensure access to reliable internet).

8 Community engagement takes time and works best when it is community-based and attuned to community wants, needs, and assets. Consider having more than one cohort in a community to allow for deeper relationship building and more nuanced understanding of local issues, and focus on localized programming rather than regional.

9 Consider how programming can align with Evergreen's new strategic focus on healthy public spaces. Evergreen could partner with community organizations and municipalities to engage youth in community engagement and design processes to reimagine public spaces. Relationships built and strengthened through the Future City Builders programs could be leveraged to support this work.

10 Policy change and significant resources are needed to prepare the next generation of city builders. Young people need more supports, access to good jobs, and supportive workplaces as they transition from education into the workforce.

1. INTRODUCTION

Good Roots Consulting was hired by Evergreen to prepare an evaluation framework for the Future City Builders program and to support data collection, analysis, and reporting activities.

This report summarizes key information about the Future City Builders program, and results from all evaluation activities conducted to evaluate the virtual delivery of the program.

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

About Evergreen

Evergreen's mission is to make cities livable, green, and prosperous. Evergreen facilitates change in communities through connection, innovation, and sustainable actions. The organization works with community builders across sectors to solve some of the most pressing issues cities face, including climate change, housing affordability, and access to nature and public spaces.

About the Future City Builders Program

Evergreen's Future City Builders is a four-month program that supports youth ages 18 to 29 to work collaboratively to develop real-world solutions for healthier and more equitable cities. Program participants work in teams and pitch their ideas to a panel of judges. The winning team receives \$5,000 in seed funding to work through the ideating and prototyping phases of their project.

The program is focused on supporting participants to gain knowledge and skills in areas that have been identified as key to the future of work, including design and systems thinking, project development and pitching, grant applications, developing and sharing personalized land acknowledgments, resume building, job searching, and digital fluency (RBC, 2018).

Future City Builders has been offered in several major Canadian cities (Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Halifax, Winnipeg, and Edmonton) and in smaller cities with a regional focus in the Kitchener-Waterloo area in Ontario (Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph: KWCG) and New Brunswick (Moncton, Sackville, Saint John, and Fredericton). The program was initially developed as an in-person program and later adapted into a virtual initiative in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program is based on the following beliefs: "We believe that youth must be involved in decision-making, in community initiatives, and in actively building their own futures. We need more youth-driven initiatives, where the role of older adults and established professionals is to empower and remove barriers to youth action." (Evergreen, 2022)

Program Goal and Objectives

Goal Statement: The goal of Future City Builders is to empower youth with the knowledge, skills, and experience to improve the health of their cities. As a result of the program, youth are more employable, better able to create their own employment opportunities, and can use their newly developed skills throughout their career and life to contribute to sustainable cities.

Objectives: The following are the more specific objectives of the program and corresponding activities:

1. Support youth in **making meaningful change** in their communities by:

- Training them in evidence-based approaches of enacting change (i.e. design and systems thinking)
- Connecting them with stakeholders who are creating inspiring, positive change
- Providing an opportunity to win seed funding

2. Support youth **facing barriers to the workforce** by:

- Equipping them with job skills
- Providing meaningful networking opportunities and practical connections
- Building their resumes through direct experience
- Providing access support through micro-grants

Program Stakeholders

The following groups are the primary stakeholders of the program:

- **Program participants:** Youth ages 18 to 29 who identify as having barriers in the workforce (e.g. being unemployed, studying and looking for work, underemployed, and/or in beginning stages of career-related work)
- **Lead organization:** Evergreen developed and implemented the program, including coordinating the program at the local level
- **Program supporters:** Future Skills Centre and RBC were the primary program funders. Other smaller funders and foundations also financially supported programming
- **Community connectors:** Act as mentors to teams of participants

Program Reach

The program has been delivered 10 times: five times in-person and five times virtually to accommodate the realities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. 305 participants have gone through the program since it began in 2018, including 112 who took part in the virtual program.

3. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold:

- To support learning that can be applied to future program delivery at Evergreen
- To generate broader recommendations that can be shared with funders and policymakers about supporting youth to make change in their communities and to overcome barriers to the workforce

Overarching Questions

The evaluation framework was designed to answer the following questions and sub-questions:

1. **Program delivery:** What was learned through program delivery?
 - 1.1. **Successes:** What worked well?
 - 1.2. **Challenges:** What did not work as well?
 - 1.3. **Program adaptations:** What pivots were made to the program and how did that impact program efficiency and achievement of program goals?
2. **Program impact:** What was the impact of the program for youth and other stakeholders?
 - 2.1. **Participants:** Who did the program impact? Was this a change from the program's original goals?
 - 2.2. **Effectiveness:** To what extent did the program achieve its goals in supporting youth to make meaningful change in their communities and overcome barriers to employment?
 - 2.3. **Broader impacts:** To what extent were there other program impacts for Evergreen as an organization and the cities where programming took place?

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation is focused on the delivery of the virtual program model from 2020 to 2023 in Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, KWCG, and New Brunswick.

Evaluation Users

Evaluation results will be used by the following groups:

- **Evergreen:** To develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the Future City Builders program and glean lessons to strengthen impacts of future programming at Evergreen
- **Future Skills Centre (FSC):** To understand the impact of FSC-funded programs and gather broader lessons for service delivery and policy

Data Collection Tools and Sources

The following data collection tools and data sources were used to address the overarching questions (page 5). The majority of the data collection tools referenced below were already designed and used by Evergreen to collect information, and Good Roots reviewed and analyzed available data. New data collection tools designed and implemented by Good Roots for this evaluation have a green star (★) beside them.

Stakeholder groups	Data sources and/or data collection tools
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pre-post survey (developed by RBC) ○ Qualitative youth feedback surveys (mid- and post-program) ○ Alumni survey ○ Key informant interviews conducted by Good Roots ★
Program team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program documents (e.g. funding proposal, program overview, evaluation results presentations) ○ FCB metrics tracker ○ Internal cohort reviews by Evergreen staff: mid-program and post-program ○ Program team group reflections: ★ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One focused on program delivery (April) - One focused on evaluation results (May)
Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community connector post-program evaluation sessions ○ Key informant interview conducted with a community connector by Good Roots ★

Evaluation Participation

Evaluation tools	Response rates
Pre-post survey	Pre-program survey: 97.3% (109/112) Post-program survey: 55.6% (62/112) Matched pre-post ¹ : 44.6% (50/112)
Alumni surveys (2023)	30.4% (31 of 102 alumni responded): the alumni survey was not shared with New Brunswick participants due to timing of that program
Interviews	7 of 10 interviewees approached were available for interviews: 6 past participants (3 from winning team, 3 from non-winning teams, 1 community connector)
Program delivery team reflection	4 of 5 team members invited were able to participate in the program delivery reflection

¹ "Matched pre-post" refers to the number of pre- and post- survey pairs that could be matched together (i.e. understood to be completed by the same person). Matched survey pairs needed to have at least two of the following identifying variables matching: initials, location, and day of the month born.

Data Analysis

Good Roots used straightforward methods to analyze and make sense of existing data collected through previous evaluation activities and any new data collected. Quantitative data (such as responses to multiple choice questions in surveys and program metrics tracked) are summarized using counts, percentages, averages, and ranges. Qualitative data collected in reflections, interviews, and open-ended survey questions were analyzed using open coding, which involves identifying common themes and the number of times each theme was mentioned. Some written responses are presented word-for-word as anonymous quotes to provide a richer picture of the various ideas communicated.

4. EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 PROGRAM DELIVERY

This section delves into key learnings from the virtual program delivery process of the Future City Builders program, including successes, challenges, and program adaptations made.

Successes

A range of program stakeholders shared their insights about what was most successful about the Future City Builders program and the following success areas were identified.



Ambitious and bold |

The national scale of the program and the focus on empowering youth to think through solutions to some of the most pressing issues of the day were seen as strengths of both the in-person and virtual program. The program was delivered in most major cities in Canada, as well as some smaller cities through a regional model. Youth-developed and community-informed solutions tackled a breadth of complex issues, from mental health to housing to food security to water conservation.



Youth focus |

The focus on youth ages 18 to 29 years was identified as a success of this program delivery model, specifically because of the energy, ideas, and passion that youth can bring, and also because of the need among youth in this age range for increased skills, professional connections, and practical work experience. This is not currently an age group that is a focus of other Evergreen programs.



Supportive webs |

The network of Evergreen facilitators, local project coordinators, community connectors, and team members provided a key source of support for program participants. This was emphasized as being particularly valuable during the isolating time of COVID-19. Specific supports provided by people in the network that were particularly well received included:

- The chance to build relationships with a team of people who were well-matched
- The empathetic and individualized approach that staff took to supporting participants
- Guest experts who were brought in to host office hours to provide feedback and insights to participants
- Community connectors who offered regular and structured meetings with teams

“ This experience was particularly great in regards to currently experiencing social isolation during the pandemic. I made internet friends while completing a pretty cool project so I can definitely say that I am extremely grateful for this experience!

Obviously every other part of it was amazing as well, but it really supported my mental health!!"



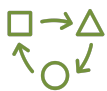
Community relationships |

This program prioritized the development of relationships with local city building experts in each community where the program was delivered. Community experts represented a range of issues, sectors, and lived experiences.



Systems and design thinking |

Another key strength of the program was the introduction of design thinking and systems thinking frameworks to participants through a range of professional and well-designed learning resources (e.g. expert presentations, written presentations, and videos) and hands-on experience through the Virtual Design Thinking Lab process. Through the design thinking process, youth could explore issues and solutions from the perspective of the communities they were engaging with and, in the process, learn what they were most passionate about to inform future career choices.



Flexibility and adaptation over time |

One of the major successes of program delivery was the commitment by Evergreen staff and project coordinators to learn and adapt the program over time. Participants were asked to provide mid-program and end-of-program reflections on program delivery, and staff also took time to formally reflect at the same intervals. For more details about how the program was adapted over time, see the Program Adaptation section (page 12).

Challenges

Program stakeholders also provided their perspectives on what did not work as well with program delivery. The following are common challenges that were described.



Clarity of communication |

A theme that came out in relation to various roles in the program—including participants, community connectors, and project coordinators—was a desire for clearer and more streamlined communication about roles, program expectations, and updates. This was shared as a challenge by participants early on in the program and was addressed by the program team over time by streamlining communication into weekly emails and logistics briefs that summarized upcoming activities and deliverables. A program handbook provided to each participant upon joining the program also clearly laid out what to expect throughout the program. Community connectors mentioned that they understood their role well but expressed a shared desire for a regular email with program updates so they could meet participants where they were at in the program journey and provide the most streamlined support possible. Project coordinators also mentioned wanting more guidance and formal training on roles and content when they started in the role.



Basecamp blues |

There were common complaints from both participants and community connectors about the lack of intuitiveness and overwhelming experience while using Basecamp—an online project management and collaboration tool that was used in the program. Some teams chose to collaborate on Google Docs instead. Community connectors suggested that a Basecamp tutorial would have been useful to help them to adopt the system, and one mentioned that they never ended up signing in at all.



Competitive focus |

The competitive focus of the program between teams culminating in the Pitch Night was identified as a source of tension with the underlying values of community engagement and responsiveness. It was also noted that many of the judges were joining from positions of corporate power and that those roles might have been better filled by additional representatives from community organizations. There were also multiple comments that the Pitch Night felt rushed and that there was not enough time for teams to respond to questions. Finally, for those teams who did win the pitch competition, some described feeling under-supported in how to go about carrying their project forward and making the most of the seed funding. One interviewee shared:

“ I remember this moment being like, 'Wait a minute, do I actually want to win this?' I'm unemployed. Like this is only \$5,000 that we're going to win and like what we proposed is a massively ambitious project. Like can I economically justify taking on all this free labor when I'm an unemployed youth?"

At the time of being interviewed in 2023, one member of a winning team mentioned that their team still had not used the seed funding they received, and didn't have a clear vision for doing so. Another interviewee's team had experienced delays in receiving the seed money. As the program progressed, teams were asked to prepare a budget for how they would spend the seed money if they won the competition.

Further suggestions for adaptation of the pitch competition included having more representatives from community organizations and municipal leaders attend the Pitch Night—specifically people who could possibly implement the solutions—to hear the ideas, and to reframe the event as more of a knowledge and idea sharing event where participants could showcase their ideas and skills.



Team silos |

A common challenge mentioned was with teams feeling disconnected from other teams. While participants got to work closely with their own team members, there was a desire to have more opportunities to collaborate and share feedback across teams. One community connector also suggested that it would have been worthwhile for participants to be able to interact with each of the community connectors while still having a lead mentor. As the program went on, there were attempts to increase

interactivity between participants by adding icebreakers and other types of activities. The program team reflected:

“ The few times when cross-team collaboration and networking happened it was VERY well received.”



Underutilized community connectors |

There was a common refrain by both participants and community connectors of not being clear about how best to engage with one another and to maximize the utility of the support and knowledge available through this relationship. In the case of some community connectors, they began to have regular meetings with participants and this proved to be very successful, however in most of the cohorts, this role was underutilized.



Challenging team dynamics |

While strengthening teamwork skills was identified in the alumni survey as the strongest outcome of the program, participants felt like they could have been better supported in addressing challenges that arose within teams. For example, one team had two members who were not very engaged and ended up dropping out of the program. A suggestion to address this was to improve the process of assessing applicants to ensure applicants are clear on the program expectations, and to ensure participants have the supports they need to fully participate in the program. Another participant shared that one of their team members was not contributing enough during the Design Thinking Process, and it felt like an unreasonable burden for the rest of the team to get that person to engage.



Relationship building takes time |

Participants were given approximately one month to identify a challenge or issue in the community, and to consult with the community about the nature of that issue. Stakeholders shared that this was not enough time to build meaningful relationships of trust and to adequately understand the types of solutions and opportunities that the community wanted. This was noted to be particularly important when building relationships with Indigenous communities.

There was also a desire for more critical feedback and support by project coordinators and Evergreen staff regarding the specific solutions being developed to ensure they were realistic and well-scoped. An alternative suggestion was to have communities themselves define a problem and apply to the program to receive support and resources to develop a solution.

“ As a youth participant, you're like, 'Oh my god, I gotta do this thing. I have this objective. And if ... you don't have the skill set, and know what meaningful engagement is, I think it can put some blinders on and potentially opens the possibility of harm or just as a youth, you're also frustrated because you're just hitting a wall, and you don't know why . . . You're being gatekept for like, good

reason, because you are coming in. I think people smell the urgency and they smell that like temporariness."



Program pace |

There were multiple comments about the timing of the program in general which felt spacious at the beginning when the design thinking approach was being introduced and rushed near the end when ideation and pitching was taking place. There were a few suggestions that lengthening the duration of the program would have helped.



Zoom fatigue |

Zoom fatigue is real. Despite the benefits that virtual programming offers in terms of being able to engage participants across a broader geography and, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the safety of participants, there was a common lament for the lack of in-person networking opportunities. Some participants who were also doing their studies online, and in some cases working from home, felt like they had limited bandwidth to then sign on and participate actively in the Future City Builders program. There was a suggestion by staff to explore a hybrid model going forward with some in-person components led by project coordinators.

Program Adaptations

A key strength of the program was the openness of program staff and partners to adapt the program over time based on evaluation results and learning experiences through implementation.

Learning resources |

The learning resources were continuously strengthened over time, including an improved syllabus with clearly defined goals and outcomes. This addressed a criticism that came out in the qualitative reflections early on in the digital delivery model about the quality of some of the program materials, including references to previous rounds of programming that had not been revised. The financial literacy session was adapted from an original focus on personal finances (which was described in comments as out of sync with the rest of the program) to focus instead on additional funding opportunities for project ideas. Participants also shared that they were keen to receive more information about project budgeting.

Supports from community connectors |

The ways in which community connectors supported participants varied by cohort and location, and did not follow a linear path of adaptation over time. In some of the earlier cohorts, participants provided feedback that they wanted to better understand and take advantage of mentorship from community connectors but felt a lack of connection. Then in the KWCG cohort, it was noted that some community connectors were holding weekly or semi-weekly meetings with their teams, and as a result were more aware of the needs of the group and better able to support them. There was also mention of strong connections developed between community connectors in the KWCG program. In the next cohort in New Brunswick, it was noted again that

there was a desire for a more consistent meeting schedule between some community connectors and teams.

Accessibility |

Program accessibility was a key consideration and something that was strengthened.

Accessibility improvements included:

- Finding additional sources of funding to offer more financial support to participants facing financial barriers, and
- Taking individual learning needs into account (e.g. offering ASL interpretation to accommodate a participant with hearing loss).

Additional suggestions to improve accessibility included:

- Offering financial compensation for every participant in every cohort to offset the opportunity costs of participating, and
- Reducing technological barriers to participation including access to reliable internet in rural areas. A participant suggested that having a one-on-one meeting between staff and each participant midway through the program would be a good way to check in on progress and additional support needs.

Anti-Oppression, DEI, and Decolonization |

The program put a high priority on creating a welcoming and respectful space for participants and community partners. A diversity, equity, and inclusion framework was developed early on in program implementation and was updated along the way and informed a shared understanding among staff for how the program should be delivered. Participants noted that the community experts brought a range of lived experiences and social identities. The program also introduced a workshop on how to create and deliver a personalized land acknowledgment, and teams took turns delivering land acknowledgments at each live event.

Here are some suggestions that stakeholders brought forwarded related to diversity, equity and inclusion:

- Further embed anti-oppression into the relationship building process by extending the period of time that participants have to do community engagement, and to offer the program multiple times in the same communities to allow for ongoing partnerships and more meaningful relationship building (i.e. depth over breadth)
- Compensate people interviewed during the program with honoraria
- Have community organizations bring forward issues for teams to work on, and then be included as judges of the Pitch Night
- Continue to embed more opportunities to learn from Indigenous community members and perspectives throughout the program (e.g. revisit the modules again through the lens of decolonization).

UnConference |

The Healthy Cities UnConference, which began in Winnipeg, was identified by Evergreen staff and community connectors as being a “brave and successful” addition to the program that should be carried forward with future iterations of the program. It was an informal mini-conference where youth were empowered to plan the event, including choosing the topics and identifying local experts to invite and share their experiences. During the event itself, participants were able to choose which virtual discussion rooms they wanted to join.

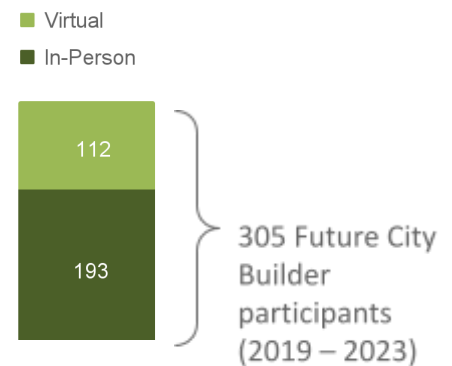
Formal course credit introduced |

In the final virtual cohort in New Brunswick, the program was able to secure a course credit equivalent for Mount Allison University students to participate. Staff reflected that there were pros and cons to this shift, as it attracted more participants into the program. It may have unintentionally led to lower engagement by some participants who did not have a firm understanding of the objectives of the program and clarity around expectations. This recruitment model also favours university students over those choosing to pursue other education and training paths or those who may face barriers to attending formal post-secondary education.

4.2. PARTICIPANT DETAILS

The Future City Builders program engaged 305 participants from 15 cities across Canada between the in-person and the virtual program model. A total of 112 virtual participants were reached.

Virtual participants shared a variety of information about their social identities, career status, and personal financial situation in pre- and post-program surveys. The following demographic information was collected through the pre-program survey. 109 of the 112 virtual program participants (97.3%) completed the pre-program survey.



Here is a breakdown of locations and participant numbers for the virtual program:

Year	Cohort / Location	# of participants	# of teams / solutions	# of community connectors	# of project coordinators
2020	Toronto	33	6	6	2
2021	Winnipeg	23	4	4	2
2021	Edmonton	17	4	4	2
2022	KWCG	29	6	6	2
2022	New Brunswick	10	3	3	1
Total		112	23	23	9

Age |

Of the 109 participants who completed a pre-survey, 108 of them were under the age of 30 (which meant that they were within the target age range) and one person identified as "30 or over". Of the 108 participants who were within the target age range, the average age of participants was 23, and the youngest participant was 18 and the oldest was 29

Gender identity |

57.8% of participants identified as female, 36.7% as male, 1.8% as non-binary, 1.8% as another gender, and 1.8% preferred not to answer.

Gender	# (n = 109)	%
Female	63	57.8
Male	40	36.7
Non-binary	2	1.8
Another gender not listed	2	1.8
Prefer not to answer	2	1.8

2SLGBTQ+ |

17.4% identified as belonging to the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited) community.

Member of the LGBTQ+ community?	# (n = 109)	%
Yes	19	17.4
No	79	72.5
Questioning/ not sure	5	4.6
Prefer not to answer	6	5.5

Country of birth |

69.7% of participants were born in Canada and 27.5% were born in another country. The remaining participants (2.8%) chose not to disclose their country of birth in the survey.

Country of birth	# (n = 109)	%
Canada	76	69.7
Another country	30	27.5
Prefer not to answer	3	2.8

Of the participants who were born in another country, 60.0% had been in Canada for five years or less, which is sometimes described as being a newcomer to Canada, and 40.0% had been in Canada for over five years.

Ethnicity |

Participants were asked to share their ethnicity, based on a list of options provided. While the question wording shared that they were able to choose more than one option, the data only showed one selection per participant, indicating that there may have been an error in the way the question was asked.

51.4% of participants identified as white, 15.6% as South Asian, 5.5% as Black, 4.6% as Southeast Asian, 4.6% as Filipino, 3.7% as Chinese, and 2.8% as Inuit. 1 participant identified as First Nations, 1 as Japanese, 1 as Latin American, and 1 as West Asian. 3.7% did not identify with any of the listed options, and 4.6% preferred not to answer.

Ethnicity	# (n = 109)	%
Black	6	5.5
Chinese	4	3.7
Filipino	5	4.6
First Nations	1	0.9
Inuit	3	2.8
Japanese	1	0.9
Latin American	1	0.9
South Asian	17	15.6
Southeast Asian	5	4.6
West Asian	1	0.9
White	56	51.4
Not listed above	4	3.7
Prefer not to answer	5	4.6

Living with a disability |

14.7% identified as living with a disability, 77.1% did not and 8.3% preferred not to answer.

Living with a disability	# (n = 109)	%
Yes	16	14.7
No	84	77.1
Prefer not to answer	9	8.3

Type of community |

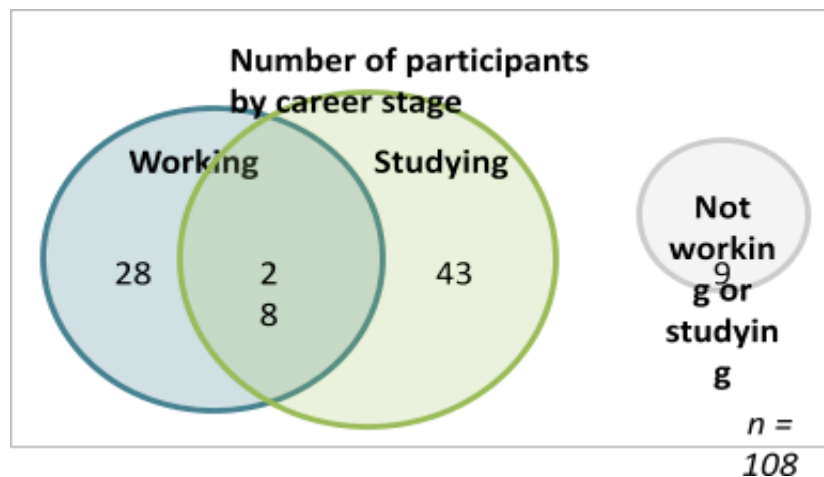
57.8% of pre-program survey respondents lived in an urban community, 33.0% in a suburban community and 4.6% in a rural community. 4.6% chose not to provide their type of community.

Type of community	# (n = 109)	%
Urban	63	57.8
Suburban	39	33
Rural	5	4.6
Prefer not to answer	5	4.6

Career stage |

Pre-program survey respondents shared whether they were studying and/or in education programs in the three months before entering the program:

- 39.4% were studying and not working
- 18.3% were working less than 30 hours per week and studying
- 13.8% were working less than 30 hours
- 11.9% were working 30 hours or more
- 8.3% were not working or studying
- 7.3% were working 30 hours or more and studying, and
- 0.9% preferred not to answer.



Type of education or training |

65.1% of the pre-program survey respondents were in school when they started the program. Of those who were in school:

- 81.7% were undergraduate students,
- 16.9% were post-graduate students, and,
- 1 was in a technical or vocational education program.

Personal financial situation |

70.6% of participants were living comfortably or meeting their needs with a little left. About a quarter of participants (23.9%) were just meeting basic expenses or not meeting them. 5.5% preferred not to answer.

Considering your own income and the income from any other people who help you, how would you describe your overall personal financial situation?	# (n = 109)	%
Meet needs with a little left	42	38.5
Live comfortably	35	32.1
Just meet basic expenses	22	20.2
Don't meet basic expenses	4	3.7
Prefer not to answer	6	5.5

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

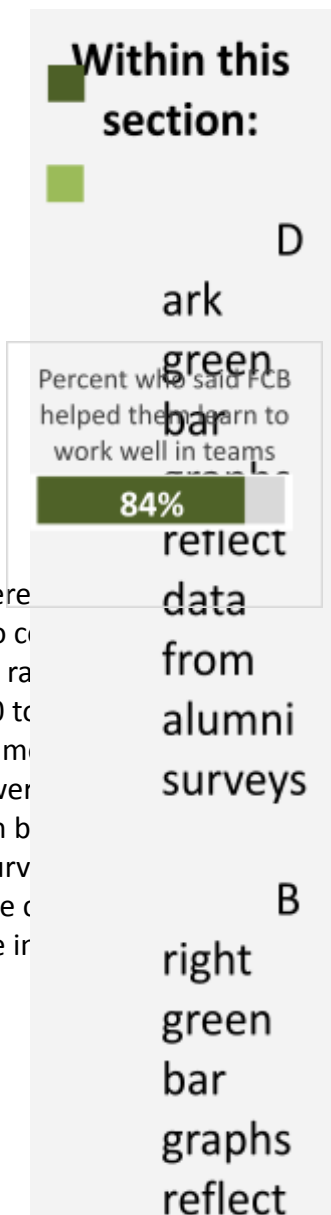
This section explores the extent to which key outcomes (i.e. those that were identified as being a priority of the program) were experienced by participants, and which outcomes came out the strongest among participants who took part in the evaluation. For tables of survey results relating to key outcome areas, see Appendix C (page 30).

Teamwork |

83.9% of program alumni surveyed reported that their participation in Future City Builders had helped them to work well in teams.

“ The program provided me with the unique opportunity to work with new people in my community on an innovative project.”

This outcome was not reflected in the pre-post program survey results where we asked to rate their level of confidence in working cooperatively in groups to complete projects or activities at the beginning and end of the program. The average rating declined slightly from pre- to post-survey results: down from 8.14 out of 10 to 7.8. A possible explanation for the discrepancy is that this outcome took some time to be realized when participants went on to work in other group situations and were learning from learnings in the program. Another possible explanation has to do with the survey design (e.g. a comparison of responses in matched pre- and post-survey may be subject to response shift bias where the respondents' frame of reference changes from pre- to post-, and retroactive survey questions within a follow-up survey may be influenced by confirmation bias or social desirability bias).



Workforce preparedness |

80.6% of post-program survey respondents reported that they felt better prepared for the workforce immediately upon completing Future City Builders.

The percentage was lower for alumni survey respondents, with 51.6% reporting that the program helped them feel better prepared for the workforce.

Skills and confidence |

61.3% of alumni surveyed reported that the program helped them to develop new skills in general, and 58.1% reported that the program helped them develop leadership skills.

44.0% of matched pre-post survey respondents demonstrated an increase in their level of confidence in speaking or presenting in front of groups and 34.0% felt more confident thinking through and identifying the cause of problems.

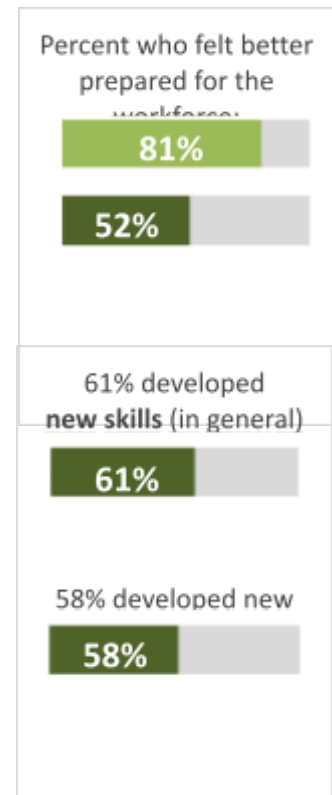
Upon completing the program, 36.0% of matched pre-post survey participants felt more certain that they had the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. 42.0% of matched pre-post respondents expressed a greater understanding of the skills they need to develop in order to reach their career goals.

Youth shared examples of other skills that they had gained or sharpened through the Future City Builders program. Skills frequently mentioned included design thinking, community engagement, interviewing, leadership, and active listening.

- “ I feel like I am much better at pausing and reflecting before I speak.”
- “ I'm better at turn-taking and inviting different perspectives.”
- “ It has renewed my confidence in my ability to be a leader and/or team member. I have been unemployed through the pandemic and it is easy to begin feeling dull and lacking. It is nice to remind myself what I have to offer a team. It is also such a joy to have access to a space where I can work with a team. I love collaborative work. I believe the scale of these challenges has pushed my leadership and collaboration skills to new levels.”

Application of learning |

Past program participants who were interviewed shared some examples of how they had applied knowledge gained in the program to their work and life more broadly, and networking came up as a common theme. One interviewee described how they had learned how to



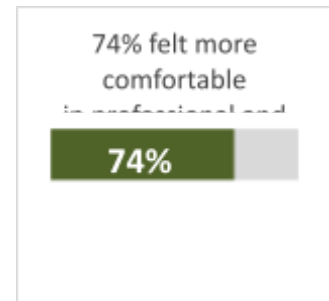
approach conversations with professionals and build relationships through the program. Another interviewee shared:

“ I definitely do more cold calls on LinkedIn to see if someone's willing to do a coffee chat and, you know, explain their journey and how their experiences made them who they are today. And how maybe I can follow a similar career trajectory. I think I feel more comfortable doing that.”

Other learnings that had been applied included systems thinking and design thinking, preparing interview questions, job interviews, taking meeting notes, presenting, and primary and secondary research.

Networking |

74.2% of alumni survey respondents reported feeling more comfortable engaging in professional and social environments, and 67.7% said they felt their participation in Future City Builders had provided them with opportunities to network and build relationships with professionals in their community.



“ More than anything, this program is worth it for the people you meet in your community. Like-minded folks who are doing work to make their communities better. It is very inspiring to see the work that is being done and awesome to have a chance to show some of these people what you can do.”

“ Because I was exposed to a variety of people from different programs/fields that all had a very similar goal from different perspectives. It really is a great way to meet people and discuss both work-related and non-work related things because everyone is at a different point in their career. Since I was still exploring my future career options, I felt as though I didn't utilize the opportunities the program provided to meet professionals in the related fields, which is something I regret. Future City Builders provides tons of great opportunities to learn skills and connect with people and I am really grateful for the experience I had in the program.”

“ After the program I was more comfortable networking and I ended up finding a summer internship position as well as a professor who wanted to be my supervisor for [a research] program opportunity. I feel more confident in my work and about my career trajectory.”

Contributing to community change |

74.2% of alumni surveyed reported that the program helped them to realize how they can contribute to the community.

“ The professionals that we have the opportunity to speak to are incredibly inspiring, and going through the whole design thinking process really makes you feel like you can make a hands-on difference in your community.”



Clarity of career vision |

36.7% of matched pre-post survey respondents indicated an increase in agreement with the following statement from the beginning of the program to the end: "I have a clear vision of what my ideal job looks like."

It is important when considering pre-post comparison data to understand what the picture looked like for participants before the program began to understand how much room for improvement there is. In the case of this question, 20.3% of the matched pre-post respondents strongly agreed with this statement before they began the program so therefore had no room to improve.

“ It helped me understand the relevant opportunities that were out there for me based on my background and interests, not limited to just my education.”

Optimism |

25% of matched pre-post survey respondents were more optimistic about attaining the career path that they want in the future, 25% were less optimistic, and 50% did not demonstrate a change in level of optimism through their survey responses.

Career advancement |

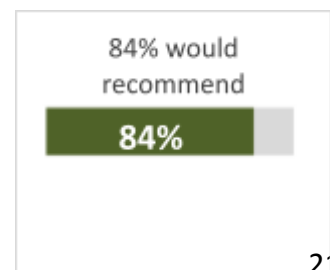
61.3% of alumni survey respondents had entered into beginning stages of career related work since beginning the Future City Builders program, and 12.9% were already in beginning stages of career related work when they began the program. It is important to note that a good portion of these participants were in studies when they entered into the program, so many of them were likely on the trajectory to achieve these jobs.

Of those individuals who had entered into new work in their chosen field, five were in the field of architecture and planning, four were working for a non-profit, and three were in environmental services. Specific jobs included Habitat Restoration, Advisor of Climate Risk and Resilience, Junior Planner, Expressive Arts Psychotherapist, and Junior Environmental Engineer. According to reflections from program staff, at least six former participants had also gone on to work at Evergreen in some capacity.

“ Future City Builders helped me grow as a person and young professional by giving me tools that helped me in interviews, which ultimately helped me land the current position I have now. It was also a great opportunity to network and meet other professionals my age.”

Alumni recommendation |

83.9% of alumni surveyed reported that they would recommend the program to a friend. The main reasons shared by respondents for why they would recommend the program were the opportunities to make new connections, and to gain new knowledge.



6.5% said they would maybe recommend the program, and 9.7% said they would not recommend the program. Those who would not recommend the program or who were unsure whether they would recommend it had different reservations, including the fact that program had been funded by a large financial institution, feeling under-supported after the program ended, experiencing challenges with team dynamics, and wanting more constructive feedback from program leaders throughout the program.

Here are some program endorsements from participants who said they would recommend the program:

- “ Future City Builders was a great program to get the ball rolling and determine feasible projects that we can engage in to better help our communities.”
- “ I learned new skills, made new connections, and deepened my connection to Toronto. Looking back, the social connections (albeit virtual) really helped me get through difficult parts of the pandemic.”
- “ A good experience to try to develop a project from 0 to 100.”
- “ If I know of anyone looking to develop a mindset and to really stretch their mind, I would definitely recommend the project. It's not for everyone, but if my colleague is motivated to learn then I would suggest the Future City Builders program.”
- “ It was a great stepping stone from being a student to entering the workforce.”

4.4 BROADER IMPACTS

This final section discusses the extent to which the Future City Builders program resulted in broader impacts for Evergreen as an organization, and the cities where programming took place.

Stronger relationships outside of Toronto |

The relationships that have been built between Evergreen in different cities across Canada have opened up new opportunities to further engage those communities in the future, including programs that emphasize public spaces, in alignment with Evergreen's latest strategic plan.

Connections with youth across Canada |

This program has resulted in many new connections between Evergreen and youth city builders across Canada. There is a desire by former participants and Evergreen staff to engage through alumni communities. In the alumni survey, 61.3% of respondents were interested in joining an alumni network; 35.5% were maybe interested; and 1 respondent was not interested.

The top three motivations for wanting to participate in a network with other alumni were:

1. To connect with like-minded young professionals across Canada
2. To participate in professional development opportunities
3. To network.

Winning projects |

The evaluation revealed challenges for winning teams in taking their ideas to the next step. However, alumni who were interviewed and surveyed shared a few examples of progress or spin-off benefits from the project ideas developed. An interviewee from a winning team was in the process of building out a minimum viable product for their project with another team member and had been able to connect with a CEO of a local organization working on a similar project. A second interviewee, who had only recently finished the program, had made plans with their group to work on the idea over the summer and into the school year, and had expressed gratitude for the support that Evergreen had provided to date around the process. It could be worthwhile to connect with all winning team members in a structured way on the extent to which ideas have been implemented or used as inspiration in other projects.

New insights and approaches |

The Future City Builders program is a place-based leadership and training program. Staff suggested that learnings from this model could be applied to the development of other capacity building programs at Evergreen for different participant groups, for example leaders working in municipalities, individuals in change management roles, and high school students. Another key insight gleaned from the delivery of this program that staff suggested bringing forward into other programs is the importance of identifying and working with community connectors and local champions early on.

5. FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

Applying lessons to other Evergreen programs

Evergreen team members emphasized that many of the lessons learned through Future City Builders can be applied to other Evergreen programs. A key lesson highlighted was around the success of the program in integrating evaluation and reflection throughout the program cycle, and adapting the program along the way.

Advice to other youth-serving organizations

Based on what had been learned through the Future City Builders program, Evergreen team members shared the following advice for other organizations offering programs for youth:

- Focus more on learning, networking and connection, and less on competition.
- Place greater emphasis on systems thinking and decolonization than on design thinking
- Start with participants' desired outcomes and goals and build enough flexibility into the program to be able to respond with a design that works towards those self-defined outcomes and goals.

Policy Lessons

Key informant interview participants and Evergreen staff involved in the program shared advice for policy makers around how to support youth in their efforts to contribute to positive community change and become workforce ready.

Alumni advice |

Former participants shared the following words of wisdom for policy makers:

- “ Many youth are ready to contribute at a meaningful level. They're ready to get into the issues. They're passionate about these things, and they don't want to just be consulted, they want to be a part of the project.”
- “ When thinking about allocating funding to programs such as Evergreen Future City Builders or other programs that will fund students to become more business- and growth-minded, think about how it affects future generations, and how it would affect the Canadian economy, socially as well.”
- “ I would have loved to have learned about these opportunities earlier on. Get into classrooms early, both traditional classrooms and non-traditional learning spaces. As a kid, I didn't know about these kinds of career options. I knew about teachers, farmers, the more widely known professions.”
- “ Policymakers should definitely try to connect more with youth in their environment, or the city or wherever they are . . . Sometimes it feels like you're kind of talking to a brick wall when you're trying to get change to happen. So if policymakers made themselves more approachable by attending these programs and funding them especially, it'd be pretty

valuable and would get a lot of young people to participate more in local government and hopefully, that could drive change for the better."

Staff and community connector advice |

The community connector interviewed and Evergreen staff shared the following recommendations for policymakers:

- “ Think about how these kinds of programs link into actual employment and capacity building within the sector."
- “ Offer accommodations. These need to be co-created, and flexible. Accommodations cannot be accommodations if they aren't actually accommodating!!!"
- “ Our future is in really good hands. Students are so smart in how they think about issues ... Everything developed by the teams could be implemented in real life. Government/policymakers should be open to connecting with students. Give them the time."

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

PARTICIPANT FOCUS: Youth ages 18 to 29 in major cities across Canada who identify as unemployed, underemployed, and/or in the beginning stages of career-related work and face barriers in the workforce

INPUTS <i>Resources we invest into the program</i>	ACTIVITIES <i>What we are doing to achieve our program goals</i>	ACTIVITY INDICATORS / OUTPUTS <i>Clues that tell us about the level and quality of activity occurring</i>	OUTCOMES <i>Specific changes we are trying to bring about through our activities</i>	OUTCOME INDICATORS <i>Clues to help us understand the degree to which we are achieving our intended outcomes</i>	IMPACTS <i>The long-term changes we are working towards</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program participants ○ Program team at Evergreen ○ Project coordinators ○ Community connectors ○ Program funding: RBC, Future Skills Canada, other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparation and promotion ○ Provide networking opportunities ○ Provide curriculum in design thinking, project development, financial literacy, etc. ○ Support teams to develop project plans and pitches ○ Host pitch competition with external judges to select winner ○ Support the winning team for 1 year post-program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # of project coordinators ○ # of community connectors ○ # of participants recruited and graduated ○ Diversity of participants and career stage ○ # of teams and solutions proposed ○ # and \$ value of grants provided ○ % of alumni surveyed who would recommend the program to a friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved skills in the following areas: group work, leadership, financial literacy ○ Clearer vision of ideal career ○ Greater sense of optimism and resilience ○ Increased comfort engaging in professional and social environments ○ Strengthened professional network ○ Better workforce preparedness ○ Greater understanding of how to contribute to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participant reports of types of skills strengthened ○ Pre-post changes in self-rated level of skills and knowledge, clarity of career vision, and sense of optimism and resilience ○ Alumni reports of increased/improved comfort, strengthened networks, workforce preparedness, understanding of how to contribute to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth create impactful change in their communities (<i>indicator: stories of broader impacts of projects from winning team members</i>) ○ Youth are able to pursue meaningful careers in city building (<i>Indicator: % of alumni surveyed indicating career advancement</i>)

APPENDIX B: EVALUATION MATRIX

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE
1. Program Delivery: What was learned through program delivery?		
1.1. Successes: What worked well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reflections on successes related to key areas including: program planning, program logistics and communication, sessions, ecosystem, staffing and values 	Internal cohort review Mural Boards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reflections on what worked well with program delivery 	Program delivery reflection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community connector reflections on what worked well 	Community connector post-program evaluations
1.2. Challenges: What did not work well as well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions of program adaptations (e.g. to live module sessions, Basecamp and Mural, delivery of design thinking content, office hours, additional supports) 	Qualitative youth feedback surveys
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reflections on challenges related to key areas including: program planning, program logistics and communication, sessions, ecosystem, staffing and values 	Internal cohort review Mural Boards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reflections on what didn't work as well with program delivery and what additional changes they would suggest if Evergreen continues to offer the program 	Program delivery reflection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community connector reflections on what did not work as well and suggestions for program adaptations 	Community connector post-program evaluations
1.3. Program adaptations: What pivots were made to the program and how did that impact program efficiency and achievement of program goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reflections on what changes were made to the program along the way and how those changes influenced program efficiency and achievement of program goals 	Program delivery reflections
2. Program impact: What was the impact of the program for youth and other stakeholders?		
2.1. Participant details: Who did the program impact? Was this a change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant age Participant career stage (pre, post, alumni) Gender identity 	Pre-post survey & Alumni survey

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE
from the program's original goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % immigrant and newcomers ● % person living with a disability ● % 2SLGBTQ+ ● Ethnicity ● Self-description of personal financial situation 	
2.2. Effectiveness: To what extent did the program achieve its goals in supporting youth to make meaningful change in their communities and overcome barriers to the workforce?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples of ways that the program has been supporting the professional networking goals shared by participants ● Examples of skills being developed (professional networking, leadership, collaboration, other) ● Degree to which program met participant expectations 	Qualitative youth feedback surveys
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of participants whose pre-post responses indicate positive outcomes in the areas of: skills and knowledge; clarity of career vision; optimism 	Pre-post survey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of participants who report positive outcomes in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comfort engaging in professional and social environments ○ Professional network ○ Workforce preparedness ○ Understanding of how to contribute to community ● % of participants indicating career advancement from pre-program to follow-up ● % of alumni surveyed who would recommend the program to a friend 	Alumni survey
2.3. Broader impacts: To what extent were there other program impacts for Evergreen as an organization and the cities where programming took place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stories of broader impacts of projects from winning team members 	Key informant interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examples of lessons that have been gleaned from FCB program delivery and applied in other Evergreen programming 	Program delivery reflections

APPENDIX C: KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS

PRE-POST SURVEY - MATCHED RESPONSES:

Outcome	Statement	Average pre-scores	Average post-scores	% who declined	% who stayed the same	% who increased
Confidence speaking or presenting in front of groups (<i>n</i> = 50)	Confidence level (1-10) in: Speaking or presenting in front of groups.	6.82/10	7.34/10	18.0%	38.0%	44.0%
Self-awareness of skills needed to reach career goals (<i>n</i> = 50)	I know what skills I need to develop in order to reach my career goals	3.64/5	3.94/5	18.0%	40.0%	42.0%
Clarity of career vision (<i>n</i> = 49)	I have a clear vision of what my ideal job looks like	3.42/5	3.72/5	16.3%	46.9%	36.7%
Skills and knowledge to succeed in the workforce (<i>n</i> = 50)	I have the skills and/or knowledge to be successful in the workforce.	3.72/5	3.96/5	20.0%	44.0%	36.0%
Confidence thinking through and identifying the cause of problems (<i>n</i> = 50)	Confidence level (1-10) in: Thinking through and identifying causes of problems	7.72/10	7.96/10	24.0%	42.0%	34.0%
Confidence working cooperatively in groups (<i>n</i> = 50)	Confidence level (1-10) in: Working cooperatively in groups to complete tasks, projects, or activities	8.14/10	7.86/10	40.0%	32.0%	28.0%
Optimism about attaining the career/job that is wanted (<i>n</i> = 48)	I am optimistic about attaining the career/job path that I want in the future.	4.04/5	4.06/5	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%

ALUMNI SURVEY:

OUTCOME	STATEMENT	% (n = 31)
Working in teams	My participation in this program helped me learn how to work well in teams	83.9%
Comfort engaging in professional and social environments	My participation in this program helped me feel more comfortable engaging in various professional and/or social environments	74.2%
Understanding of how to contribute to community change	My participation in this program helped me realize how I can contribute to my community	74.2%
Professional network	My participation in this program provided opportunities to network and build relationships with professionals in my community	67.7%
General skills development	My participation in this program helped me develop new skills	61.3%
Leadership skills	My participation in this program helped me develop leadership skills	58.1%
Commitment to personal development	My participation in this program deepened my commitment to personal development	54.8%
Workforce preparedness	My participation in this program helped me feel better prepared for the workforce	51.6%
Preparedness to respond to new career opportunities	My participation in this program helped me feel better prepared to respond to new career opportunities.	51.6%
Fulfillment of ambitions and career goals	My participation in this program has helped me fulfill my ambitions/career goals.	45.2%