



NC Office of Strategic Partnerships Major Activities and Impact



Overview

The North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) develops, launches, and enhances partnerships between state government and North Carolina's research and philanthropic sectors. At the core of this work is a focus on building a culture of evidence and increasing the use of research and evidence to inform policy and programmatic decisions.

This document highlights some major activities and impact from OSP's first two years. They are described briefly below and in more detail throughout.



Government Research Partnership Projects [Page 2](#)

More than 20 projects facilitated with state agencies and expressions of interest in partnerships from 175+ researchers. Projects completed, underway, and emerging stem from agency-identified priorities and involve expertise from a wide range of external partners.



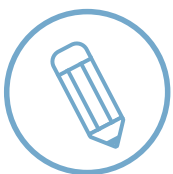
Partnerships with Philanthropy [Page 3](#)

OSP builds, strengthens, and institutionalizes relationships between state government and the NC philanthropic sector. This has included expanding educational and engagement opportunities for government-philanthropy partnerships, sharing information across sectors, and more.



Talent Pipeline Development [Page 4](#)

Multiple efforts with partners in NC (government, college and university career services, nonprofits) and beyond to catalyze, launch, and strengthen the talent pipeline into government and expand opportunities for students from all 110 NC institutions of higher education.



Answering the Call [Page 5](#)

Daily requests, amounting to hundreds over time, for assistance ranging from guidance on policy engagement to identifying expertise for agencies to developing educational resources. Requires nimbleness and being both proactive and responsive to opportunities and needs.



Building Capacity for Strategic Partnerships [Page 6](#)

1000+ participants with diverse interests and expertise have attended learning and engagement opportunities to enhance cross-sector partnerships and elevate North Carolina state government's internal capacity to generate and use evidence in its policy and programmatic functions.



Government Research Partnership Projects

More than 20 government research [partnership projects](#) with state agencies completed, underway, or emerging. Interest from researchers at colleges and universities (public, private, HBCU/MSI, community colleges) and research organizations. OSP prioritizes partnerships that are scalable, sustainable, and develop public, open-source resources.

[Department of Revenue \(DOR\):](#) Improving DOR communication to NC residents about tax non-payment. Collaborative effort among DOR, OSP, Duke, UNC Chapel Hill, and The Policy Lab at Brown to develop new standard communications material that will reach 400,000+ NC residents. This could increase tax payments, decrease the need for enforcement, and be a model for other state agencies that regularly communicate with NC residents.

[Department of Transportation:](#) Increasing the accessibility and clarity of Division of Motor Vehicles forms used by hundreds of thousands of people, with the goals of incorporating equity considerations into communications and improving customer service.

[Department of Environmental](#)



[Quality \(DEQ\):](#) Working with the Division of Air Quality (DAR) to identify partners with the expertise to review a staffing and operational needs analysis. Analysis stemmed from a recognition that 12 DAR staff with a combined 350+ years of experience are eligible or near-eligible for retirement, highlighting the need for long-term planning for the benefit of all North Carolinians.

COVID-19 wastewater monitoring project of NC A&T State University and Guilford County Health Department to test wastewater for the prevalence and transmis-

sion of SARS-CoV-2 and variants in school zones. OSP facilitated equipment and training from The NC Policy Collaboratory.

[Department of Justice:](#) Facilitating research partnerships to inform the implementation of recommendations from Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. Topics include racial disparities in policing of protests/demonstrations, law enforcement training, effects of police officers' health on job performance, and race measures in NC's public safety data systems.

[Department of Administration:](#) Analyzing process, application, and placement data for the [State of North Carolina Internship Program](#). Increasing the use of data to help attract and place applicants representative of NC's diverse student body.

Working with the NC Community College System and Department of Commerce on an evaluation of the Finish Line Grant program.

Partnering with the Governor's Crime Commission on increasing its use of evidence in grantmaking and on the development of evidence through grants to domestic violence and sexual assault services providers.



Partnerships with Philanthropy

OSP created the [Philanthropy Liaison](#) role, a first-of-its-kind position, to educate government about philanthropy and vice-versa; to foster relationships; and to promote partnership and collaboration between the two. Early results include:

- Reaching hundreds of representatives from philanthropy and state agencies by leading education sessions and developing resources:

- [State Government 101](#) and [Philanthropy 101](#): Virtual sessions for philanthropy and state government to learn how to navigate the other sector.

- Monthly Connect: [The Many Roles of Philanthropy in Government-Philanthropy Partnerships](#) (see [pg. 6](#) for more on Monthly Connect)

- Informing state agencies about grant opportunities.

- Conducting listening sessions with state agency leaders and leaders of philanthropies across NC to identify and support development of partnerships.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): In response to philanthropy's request for additional information about ARPA, authored [How Might Philanthropy Leverage or Complement the American Rescue Plan Act in](#)

Findings from Survey of 43 Philanthropies

90%

of respondents were definitely or possibly interested in partnering with state government

65%

want to learn about opportunities to be involved with government-research partnerships

[North Carolina: Five Ideas for Philanthropy](#) and shared it with over 350 people in philanthropy in NC, plus several other funders in the southeast and nationally. Developed a [Fact Sheet](#) and [FAQs](#), briefed numerous foundation leaders on ARPA's process and protocols, and hosted a [Child Tax Credit Webinar](#) attended by representatives from state government and philanthropy, which proposed a way in which

philanthropy could specifically align with ARPA.

- Developing strategies for enhancing state government's grants management systems and practices. Surveyed and co-convened over 70 staff across over 15 agencies to identify learning needs and develop communities of practice.

- [Survey of philanthropies](#) that invest in NC. Sixty respondents from 43 philanthropies. Major findings include:

- Significant Interest in Partnerships: 90% of respondents are definitely or possibly interested in partnering with state government.

- Specific Interest in Government-Research Partnerships: 65% want to learn about opportunities for philanthropy to be involved with government-research partnerships.

Read more about the **Philanthropy Liaison position** [here](#).





Talent Pipeline Development

Launching and catalyzing numerous collaborative efforts to strengthen the talent pipeline into government and other public sector/public service careers. This includes engagement with NC's 110 institutions of higher education to expand opportunities for students across the state.

Ed2NC

A joint effort between the NC Office of State Human Resources and OSP. Involves representatives from state agencies and NC colleges and universities to connect students and graduates to jobs in state government. Key to the effort is ongoing cross-sector information sharing between higher education and government. Early results include:

- Creating a [public database](#) of contact information featuring more than 20 state agencies and NC's 110 institutions of higher education
- Developing [state agency fast fact sheets](#)
- Launching an NC state government [entry level positions data bank](#)

NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps

In 2020 and 2021, placed 194 students in internships at 110+ nonprofit and government organizations across nearly 50 counties to support COVID-19 response. Students contributed

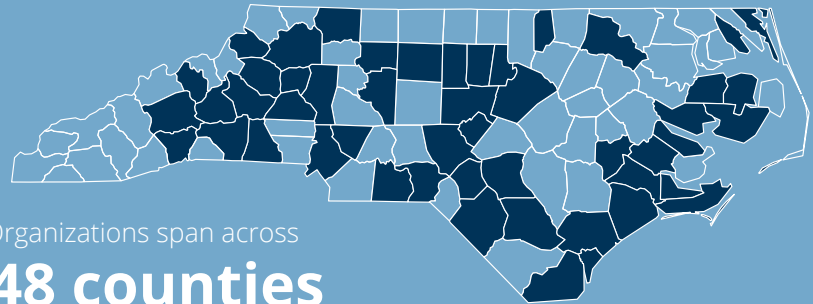
NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps By the Numbers



194
student participants



110
nonprofit and government host organizations



Organizations span across

48 counties

(shown in dark blue)

to work ranging from vaccine distribution to nonprofit fundraising to town management.

Co-led by OSP and Lead for North Carolina, the Response Corps initiative included two-day training and speaker series attended by hundreds of interns from the Response Corps and other NC internship and fellowship programs.

In 2021, every intern was paid thanks to a partnership with two North Carolina philanthropies.

Other highlights:

- \$100,000+ in grants awarded to OSP and partners for projects around workforce diversity, talent pipeline development, and gov-

ernment-research partnerships

- Hosted relevant Monthly Connects such as [Strengthening the State Government Talent Pipeline](#); [COVID-19 Student Response: Government-University-Student Partnerships](#); and [Maximizing University-Government Talent Partnerships](#)
- Analysis of State of North Carolina Internship Program to spur program enhancements (more on [pg. 2](#))
- Convened 30+ internship program leaders to explore cross-program coordination opportunities
- Joined the Volcker Alliance [Government-to-University Initiative](#)



Answering the Call

OSP receives daily requests for assistance, information, and sector-bridging support. In addition to responding to these requests, OSP proactively identifies and pursues opportunities to enhance cross-sector partnerships.

Government Research Partnerships Learning Forum

150+ representatives from 15+ state agencies, 22 colleges and universities (public, private, HBCU/MSI), philanthropy, and national partners attended the two-day [Government Research Partnerships Learning Forum](#) designed to build on the growing interest in collaboration from state and non-governmental partners. Focus on existing cross-sector partnerships in NC and strategies for developing and sustaining new, successful partnerships.

NC Department of Public Safety (DPS) Computation Assistance

DPS requested assistance with revising an important but outdated and complicated accounting formula. OSP connected DPS staff to a UNC School of Government professor who worked with DPS to adjust the formula and confirm that it was functioning as DPS intended.

Monthly Connect: [North Carolina Boards and Commissions](#)

Featured the nomination and application process for serving



on boards and commissions and highlighted how doing so provides opportunities for sharing expertise and affecting policy.

COVID-19 Response Efforts

- Launched the [NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps](#), a partnership among government and nonprofit employers, colleges/universities, and students (more on [pg. 4](#))
- Developed resources for philanthropy and nonprofits to understand the American Rescue Plan Act (more on [pg. 3](#))
- Introduced NC Department of Health and Human Services and NC Counts Coalition leaders, which led to multi-faceted partnerships, including [Healthier Together](#)
- Drafted vaccine talking points for state agency leaders and shared vaccine information in OSP Highlights



“With their guidance, in an hour on Zoom we were able to adjust the formula to produce an accurate calculation. It was a lovely example of resourceful, smart collaboration and working collectively to solve a small but impactful problem. We have continued to engage and look forward to future partnerships.”

**CINDY PORTERFIELD,
DIRECTOR OF DPS
JUVENILE COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS**



Building Capacity for Strategic Partnerships

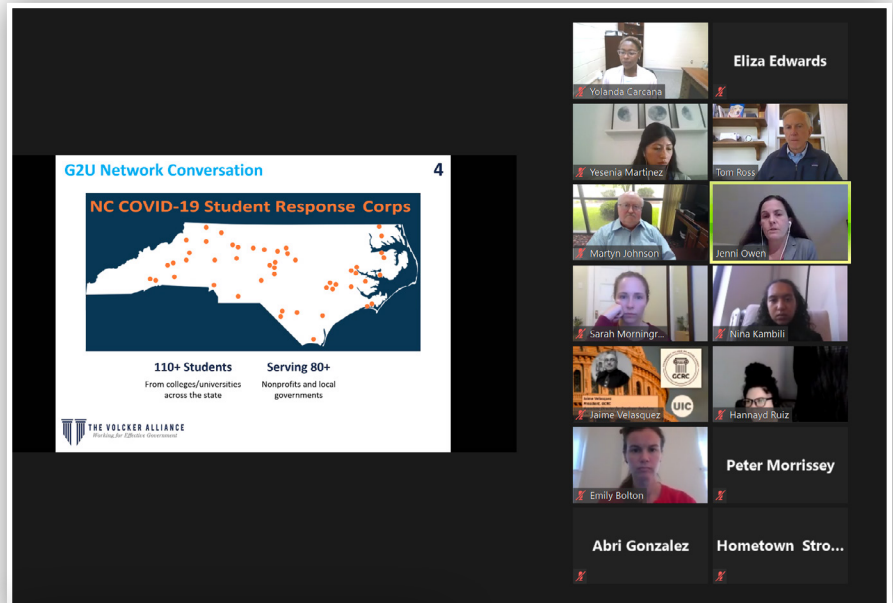
Providing learning, networking, and engagement opportunities to build capacity for cross-sector partnerships. Reaching 1000+ people monthly through Monthly Connect panel discussions, Highlights newsletter, and more; see [Government-Research Partnerships \(pg. 2\)](#), [Philanthropy Liaison \(pg. 3\)](#) and [Answering the Call \(pg. 5\)](#) for additional examples.

Monthly Connect: Panel discussions on topics relevant to cross-sector partnerships. Over 70 featured speakers from government, research, philanthropy, and nonprofit realms have shared their expertise on issues ranging from the state budget, government-research and government-philanthropy partnerships, and the talent pipeline to government.

50-200 participants each session

20 sessions & 1,150+ participants to date

Public, recorded & shared widely



Highlights: A monthly newsletter for 1000+ subscribers (and growing) in NC and beyond, including partners in government, research, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sectors.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to:

- NC Office of Strategic Partnerships Advisory Group
- Partners at state agencies and colleges and universities
- Philanthropic organizations that support our work
- NC Office of Strategic Partnerships interns
- All other partners and advisors who support the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships

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February 2022

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