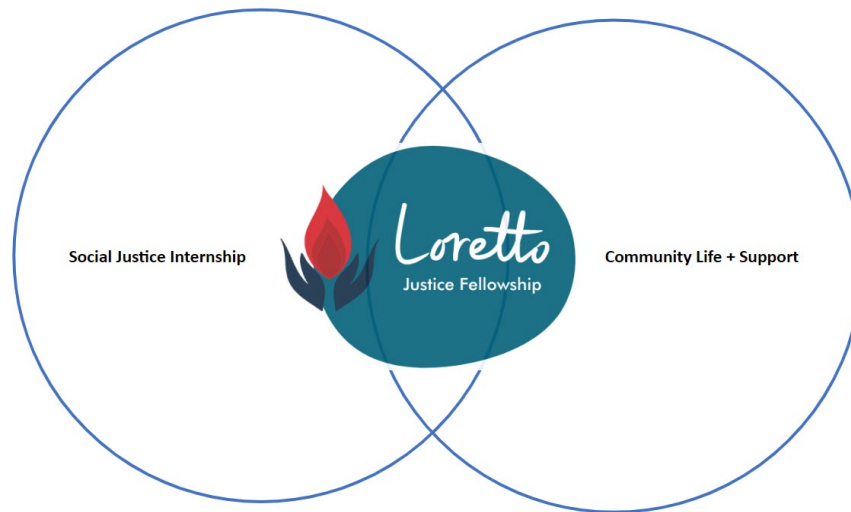


The **Loretto Justice Fellowship** partners with the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) Department of Social Work, UTEP's Law School Preparation Institute and local social justice organizations (see below for partner list and links to partner websites). Centering local leadership in the pursuit of systemic change, the Fellowship invests in, partners with and empowers UTEP students through their personal and professional journeys in justice work. The work of Loretto Justice Fellows furthers the mission and values of the Loretto Community; enhances the capacity of local social justice organizations; deepens the personal and professional development of Fellows; and over time, builds a network of justice-oriented practitioners who can work together toward affecting systemic change.

In Fall 2023, we launched a pilot year of the Loretto Justice Fellowship. This pilot program grew out of the long-standing Loretto Volunteer Program, yet this new program more explicitly centers equity, inclusion, liberation and the needs of the local community as a response to the calls of the times. The program comprises two overlapping areas:



Social Justice Internship:

7 Fellows engage in:

- part-time, one-year internships while pursuing degrees at UTEP; Fellows serve 480 hours per year and are paid a stipend equivalent to the hourly living wage in El Paso county (~\$14/hour)
- Fellows receive supervision + mentorship in collaboration with placement site + UTEP partners
- Fellows receive \$4,000-5,000 in Education Award funds to be paid towards student loan debt, current or future tuition costs

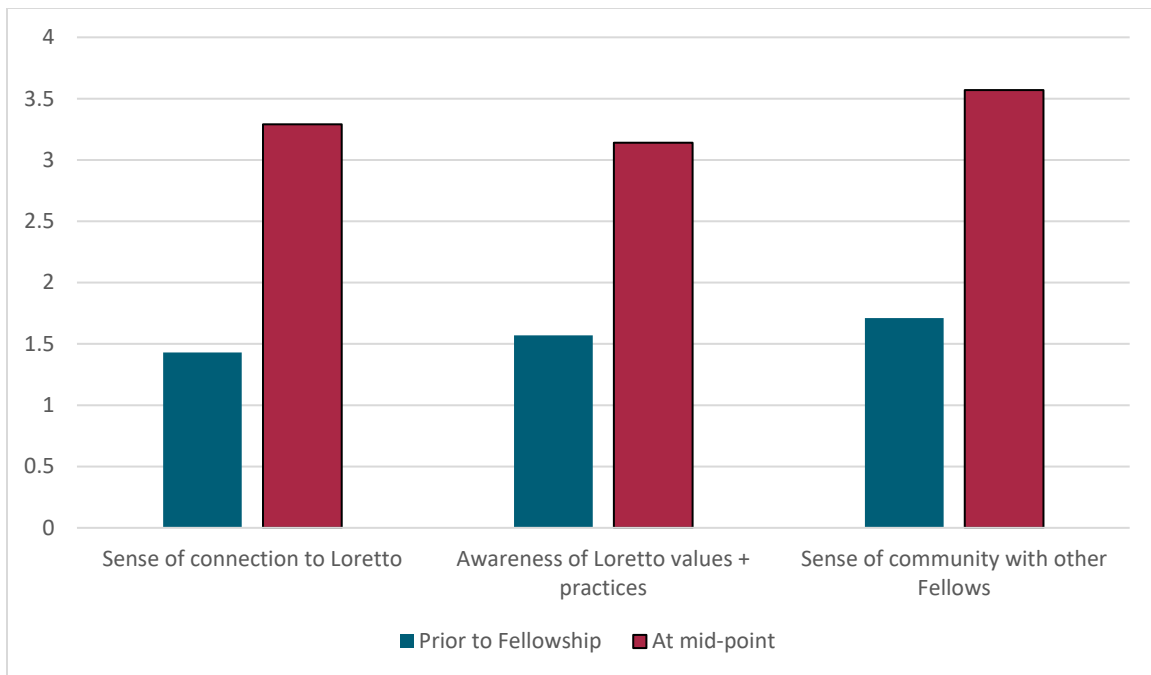
Community Life + Support:

Regular in-person and virtual community gatherings for Fellowship participants encourage:

- peer collaborative learning, sharing and support
- professional development, including training in trauma-informed practice, mental health + addiction, grant-writing and community organizing
- personal reflection, mental wellness + self-care
- Loretto Community connections, advocacy and activism

Prior to launching this pilot program, we met with key stakeholders including potential Fellows, placement partner sites, and the Loretto Justice Fellowship Advisory Board to establish 4 key priority areas: Loretto mission and values; community connection; equity, inclusion, liberation; and centering the needs of local placement site partner organizations and local communities.

We measured our progress in **Loretto mission and values** as well as **community connection** and saw significant progress toward our program goals in each of the four areas using a retrospective pre-post survey. Fellows were asked to score themselves on a scale of 0 to 4 on each program goal PRIOR to beginning the program and to then share their current (Dec 2023) score. Thus, each set of scores shows growth prior to the program launch to the mid-point of the program.



In the pursuit of **equity, inclusion and liberation**, the Loretto Justice Fellowship invests in emerging leaders from within the communities they serve, particularly prioritizing investment in participants of color who have language, experiential and cultural connection to their clients and the justice efforts of their placement organizations. The program strives to support inclusive access to transformative experiences in justice work and education. **Mid-point assessment data shows 100% of Fellows feel strongly motivated to participate in social justice efforts because of their personal life experiences.** All 23/24 Fellows are fluent in Spanish and English, identify as Latinas and have close ties to the immigrant community, several as Dreamers, first- or second-generation Americans. Our Fellows are also first-generation college students, mothers, family caregivers and residents of both Ciudad Juarez and El Paso. Our **mid-point assessment data shows that the financial benefits of the Loretto Justice Fellowship have increased all of our Fellows' capacity to engage meaningfully with justice work** - capacity that would otherwise be hindered by financial stress, necessity to work additional jobs/hours beyond their internship and/or systemic barriers to unpaid internships.

In creating the Loretto Justice Fellowship program, we centered a **core commitment to reciprocity, mutuality and centering the needs of local community partners and those they serve.** Prior to launching the program, community partners shared these hopes for a new program model that would better support their teams and clients:

- Participants with greater linguistic, cultural and experiential alignment with placement site missions and communities
- Better alignment between skills, roles and scope of the role, with participants bringing both greater competencies and professional growth motivation to the table
- Funding and additional supports to attract and retain qualified participants, particularly when placements face staffing and funding shortages
- Options that create pathways for longer term participation in the work and sustained relationship with the placement site/community

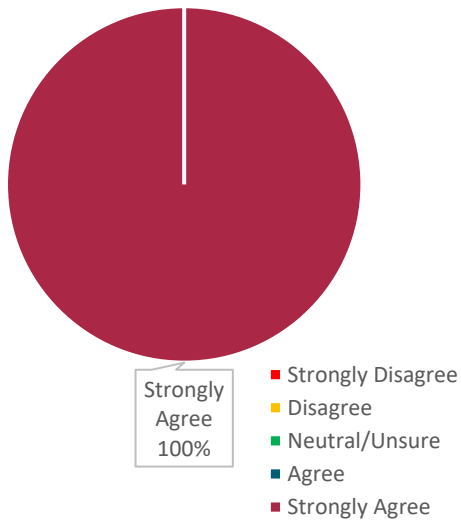
Our 23/24 program pilot year partners are:

- [Center Against Sexual and Family Violence](#)
- [Ciudad Nueva](#)
- [El Paso Villa Maria](#)
- [Estrella del Paso](#) (formerly Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services)
- [Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center](#)

Mid-point assessment data shows unanimous agreement among program stakeholders: ***Would you agree there is a sense of mutuality and collective benefit among Fellows, placement sites, UTEP and the communities we serve?***

Fellows Response

7 respondents



Community Partners Response

9 respondents
(6 placement site partners, 3 UTEP partners)

