

Marco Marquez ***AmeriCorps VISTA*** ***Member of the Year***

Having earned his bachelor's degree and with a set of data-related skills in hand, Marco Marquez decided to put those skills to use through service as an AmeriCorps VISTA member by digging deeply into the inequities in Milwaukee's education system. With a position at Milwaukee Succeeds, a community-wide education initiative based on collective impact that focuses on systems change, Marco effectively uses data to both help uncover root causes of educational inequities and highlight promising practices that are working to improve them.

With his keen data skills, Marco was able to quickly disaggregate, analyze, and translate raw data into useful information for colleagues and partners, particularly through learning how to use data visualization software and creating user-friendly methods for presenting the information. Highlights from this aspect of his service included gathering and sharing information on FAFSA with Milwaukee high schools, compiling the key indicator on employment rates and postsecondary graduates for the kickoff of the Higher Educational Regional Alliance, an analysis and report of Seton Catholic Schools Measures of Academic Progress, and an internal performance measures assessment for Milwaukee Succeeds. Marco also helped to redesign the Impact section of the Milwaukee Succeeds website, which serves to highlight important educational data to the community. Additionally, Marco served as the liaison between the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee on their "Board Pipeline" Initiative, which seeks to prepare young Latinx individuals to sit on nonprofit boards in Milwaukee.

Marco's self-directed participation in conferences, seminars, and webinars, all focused on reducing equity gaps, which helped him better question the data and how it was used by Milwaukee Succeeds. The staff at Milwaukee Succeeds found that Marco approached his work with curiosity, reflection, and persistence, asking thoughtful questions and digging deeply into data to determine what story needed to be told, particularly from an equity perspective. Additionally, they felt that he eagerly greeted each challenge and sought out opportunities to continuously improve his skills and abilities due to an innate passion for his work to make a difference in the community.

