



# Marcus Chaffee, M.A.

Senior Consultant, The Improve Group

Marcus is a collaborative and equity-driven consultant with a background in urban planning, community development, and participatory design. At the Improve Group, they bring a passion for helping organizations meaningfully engage with their diverse communities for shared decision-making. As a recent Twin Cities transplant, Marcus enjoys uncovering local quirks, like its claim to the world's largest contiguous system of enclosed, second-level bridges.

## Expertise

### Public Engagement

Marcus brings a participatory, accessibility-centered approach to public engagement, meaningfully including diverse perspectives in decision-making. Through thoughtfully and artfully crafted inclusion strategies, Marcus aims to bridge multiple forms of knowing into actionable insights. Whether the engagement goal is informational or transformational, Marcus enjoys supporting organizations as they bridge planning and action with community.

### Collaboration

Marcus recognizes that collaboration has the power to overcome challenges that individual organizations cannot face alone. By emphasizing trust, transparency, and co-creativity, Marcus bridges divisions and harnesses relationships to bring about meaningful results for collective action. Marcus's experiences in building coalitions, developing communities of practice, and convening advisory groups spans affordable housing, community development, healthcare, and child and family services.

### Organizational Development

Marcus has a passion for supporting organizations as they imagine desired futures and design strategies to align collective action. Marcus works with organizations to reflect on and strengthen their structures, processes, and culture to advance equity. Marcus brings together diverse perspectives with their experience in participatory design for strategic planning and program design and evaluation.

## Professional Experience

**The Improve Group** | St. Paul, MN | Senior Consultant | 2025-present | Plans, leads, and implements project activities to make the most of information, navigate complexity, and ensure clients' investments of time and money lead to meaningful, sustained impact.

**The Improve Group** | St. Paul, MN | Associate Consultant | 2025 | Worked collaboratively with project teams to complete activities.

**Independent Contracting & Consulting** | Omaha, NE | Consultant | 2022-2024 | Pursued opportunities to promote public participation, leading a queer history mapping project, documenting public meetings for a participatory civic media organization, co-creating an organizational development process to assess workplace accessibility.

**City of Omaha Planning Department** | Omaha, NE | City Planner | 2020-2022 | Ensured access to federal funding for community development (ESG, CDBG, and HOME), cultivating relationships and creating resources to support public participation in the development of affordable housing and community development.

**Graduate School Internships** | Seattle & Bellevue, WA | Graduate Intern | 2017-2019 | Refined qualitative and quantitative research skills to support collaborative governance services, behavioral health advocacy, and municipal food policy.

**CoCreative Labs** | Omaha, NE | Founding Principle | 2014-2016 | Partnered with a facilitation consultant to design and conduct participatory processes for organizational development and public engagement for a variety of non-profit organizations.

**Health Center Association of Nebraska** | Omaha, Nebraska | Director of Access Services | 2013-2014 | Led a multimillion-dollar outreach and enrollment campaign using data-informed engagement strategies and facilitated a statewide community of practice for community health centers navigating the unpredictability and complexities of Affordable Care Act implementation.

**Nebraska Appleseed** | Lincoln, NE | Economic and Healthcare Policy Coordinator | 2012-2013 | Supported advocacy efforts to improve social safety net systems by convening coalitions, performing public outreach, and conducting policy research.

**La Tierra Prometida** | Aguadilla, PR | Americorps VISTA | 2011-2012 | Oversaw a farmers market as part of a transitional housing program, blending trainings in sustainable farming and social services for men experiencing chronic homelessness.

## Education

University of Washington | Master of Urban Planning & Master of Public Administration | Thesis in progress

Universidad Alcalá de Henares | Master of Arts in Multicultural and Bilingual Education

Valparaiso University | Bachelor of Arts in Urban and Economic Affairs & Spanish | Individualized Major

## Training

Technology of Participation® Facilitation Methods | Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

Technology of Participation® Strategic Planning | Institute of Cultural Affairs in the U.S.A.

## Professional Affiliations

American Planning Association | AICP Certification | In progress