



Network for Teaching  
Entrepreneurship

# IMPACT REPORT FY25

July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) West's programs. We are excited to share the hard work of our team, students, teachers, schools, and community partners. Your support and partnership help NFTE fuel the future through entrepreneurship education.



Since 1987, NFTE has been developing innovative, experiential entrepreneurship education programs and bringing them to young people in under-resourced communities across the U.S. and around the world. NFTE pioneered the idea of the entrepreneurial mindset as a set of skills and attitudes that can be learned and refined through practice. The entrepreneurial mindset is the foundation of our work and at the heart of everything we do.

NFTE provides students with opportunities to build skills, confidence, and know-how to recognize opportunities, discover their passions, develop their talents, and grow their networks. Young people who complete NFTE's entrepreneurship programs are more likely to engage in learning, achieve their educational and career goals, launch businesses, have increased lifetime earnings, and feel greater job satisfaction. By activating the entrepreneurial mindset, we are uniquely preparing students to be career-ready for the future of work.

Home to the 2024 NFTE  
Young Entrepreneur of the Year!



Lucio Hightower-Rojas

NFTE's experiential learning model is proven to develop the entrepreneurial mindset, and we believe that in doing so, it lays a foundation for success throughout life. Experiential learning opportunities and exposure to volunteers allow young people to recognize their strengths, broaden their perspective, empower them to take control of their lives, inspire them to aim higher and equip them with the skills they need to succeed. NFTE programs are also proven to inspire students at risk of disengaging by making learning more relevant. Entrepreneurship education can be a critical springboard that launches lifelong learners and achievers.



31

School and  
Nonprofit Partners

1,549

Students  
Served



35

Teachers Certified  
and Trained



# ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS PROGRAM (AEP) IN THE WEST

The Aspiring Entrepreneurs Program (AEP) encompasses NFTE's full pathway of entrepreneurship programs offered in school and out of school and is designed to inspire students to pursue their dreams for future careers and small business startups. Through AEP, learners develop an original business plan for companies that can be launched in their own community. AEP is creating the next generation of diverse entrepreneurs and job creators, developing the talent pipeline, and advancing inclusive capitalism.

NFTE programs are intended to develop in students the following skills:

- Academic Skills: Applied academic skills, including business communications, research, and public speaking skills in small business development and management.
- Industry Skills/Technical Skills: Key technical skills, including financial and digital literacy skills, and skills unique to new businesses.
- Employability: Entrepreneurial skills and mindset that can be applied in a variety of business and professional contexts.

We measure student learning of these skills through a combination of student surveys, assessments, and experiential outputs:

- Entrepreneurial Mindset Index (EMI) – Pre- and post-administration of the EMI to measure student growth in the eight domains of the entrepreneurial mindset. The Pre/Post EMI also captures students' entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviors, engagement, and demographic information.
- Entrepreneurial Content Assessment – Administration of pre- and post-assessment to measure student mastery of core entrepreneurship content.
- Creation and presentation of an original business plan.



I'm so grateful for the work you put into our youth and providing the opportunities for growth beyond just joining the labor force but also encouraging thought leadership, individualism, entrepreneurship, etc. I wish I had opportunities like this when I was young, and hope that NFTE programs can be in every high school! I think encouragement and opportunities to explore at this age is just invaluable, so really grateful to you for creating and fostering this space.

- NFTE West Volunteer



Average FRL Rate  
NFTE WEST Partners

77%



School  
Districts

11



Individual  
Volunteers

600+



Volunteer  
Hours

1400+



# WORLD SERIES OF INNOVATION IN THE WEST

Interested in solving problems that matter? Welcome to World Series of Innovation (WSI). NFTE's WSI invites young people to get involved in solving some of the biggest challenges humanity faces today and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

VIEW  
WINNERS  
HERE!

## IMAGINATION LEAGUE (AGES 5 - 12)

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION  
Aramco Clean Water  
Challenge

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC  
GROWTH  
Citi Foundation Youth  
Economic Development  
Challenge

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
MetLife Foundation  
Good Health and Well-  
Being Challenge



Students

8



Schools

2



Top Winners

1

## IMPACT LEAGUE (AGES 13-24)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC  
GROWTH  
Citi Foundation Youth  
Economic Advancement  
Challenge

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
CBT Technology Solar  
Innovation Challenge

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
MetLife Foundation  
Good Health and Well-  
Being Challenge

13 CLIMATE ACTION  
Zuora Climate Action  
Challenge

4 QUALITY EDUCATION  
Intuit Game Based  
Financial Learning  
Challenge

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS  
EY Responsible AI  
Challenge

4 QUALITY EDUCATION  
Comerica Quality  
Education Challenge

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION  
Aramco Clean Water  
Challenge



Out of 5,500 Students Worldwide

1,055

Were NFTE West Students



Schools

69



Finalists

43



Top Winners

22



## 2024-2025 Program Partners

### Los Angeles

Alma Fuerte Public School  
Animo City of Champions  
Boys and Girls Club of Burbank and  
Greater East Valley  
Carson Senior High School  
College Track - Crenshaw  
Downtown Magnets High School  
Eagle Rock Jr/Sr High School  
Elizabeth Learning Center  
EmpowHer Institute - Environmental Charter  
Foshay Learning Center  
Hamilton High School  
Hawthorne Math and Science Academy  
Hawthorne Middle School  
ICEF View Park Preparatory Accelerated  
Charter High School  
Linda Esperanza Marquez High School  
Los Angeles Academy of Arts and Enterprise  
Los Angeles Urban League  
Monrovia High School  
Nightingale Middle School  
Paramount High School

### Arizona

Highland Prep Surprise Arizona

### Bakersfield

Boys and Girls Club of Kern Valley

### Modesto

Joseph Gregori High School

### Nevada

Fred Traner Middle School

### Sacramento

College Track Sacramento

### San Diego

Urban Discovery Academy

### San Francisco

Abraham Lincoln High School

Galileo Academy of  
Science & Technology

John O'Connell High School

### San Jose

Independence High School  
Silver Creek High School

### Ventura

Boys and Girls Club of  
Greater Oxnard and Hueneme

NFTE WEST: Home to the 2024 NFTE  
YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR  
OF THE YEAR



Lucio Hightower-Rojas



# HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2024-2025 program year, NFTE West achieved the following thanks to your support:

- **Students Served:** NFTE West served 1,549 young people throughout the West Region. Our schools averaged a 77% free or reduced lunch rate, indicating the highest-need schools were served by NFTE West.
- **Teachers Served:** 35 teachers were each provided more than 60 hours of training, professional development, and ongoing NFTE support.
- **Schools and Partners Served:** 25 schools, 6 nonprofit organizations, and 11 school districts.
- **Volunteers:** 293 volunteers provided over 1,000 hours as coaches, judges, mentors, field trip hosts, and guest speakers



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### SUMMER 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

#### Sacramento Kings BizCamp

Last August, NFTE launched its first-ever summer BizCamp in Sacramento in partnership with the G-Unity Foundation, College Track, and the Sacramento Kings. Hosted at the Golden 1 Center, 25 College Track students spent two weeks building their business ideas in an unforgettable setting. With guidance from 15 incredible volunteers and inspiration from a dynamic speaker panel—including representatives from Independent Artist Group—students explored entrepreneurship, developed their pitches, and gained confidence in sharing their stories and ideas.

#### Road to Nationals: Send-off!

44 volunteers, totaling over 90 hours, participated in coaching sessions to prepare our 6 West student finalists for the 2024 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge in New York.

### FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

#### 2024 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge in New York City

Presented by the Citi Foundation and EY, with support from PayPal and Santander, the National Challenge in October is one of NFTE's signature events. NFTE West was proud to send six student businesses from California to compete for the finals in New York City. Their businesses included:

- **Lucio Hightower-Rojas - Los Angeles, CA, ScholarBrilliance:** A mission-driven technology company that aims to revolutionize how students fund their education and pursue their academic passions. By combining AI, an extensive scholarship database, writing assistance, organizational tools, and educational resources into one integrated platform, Scholar Brilliance provides students with a complete solution to navigate the scholarship landscape and maximize their chances of earning financial aid
- **Dorothy Ho & Kimberly Tran - San Francisco, CA, Nutrishell:** The majority of fertilizers sold have intimidating packaging and are made of ingredients that harm the environment. NutriShell produces organic, eggshell-based fertilizers packaged in a cute aesthetic to meet our customers' wants of aesthetic packaging and an eco-friendly garden nutrient.
- **Solonia Allen - Los Angeles, CA, Almnd Mlk:** Almndmlk is dedicated to creating irresistibly tasty vegan bundt cakes, using organic ingredients. Almndmlk is committed to reducing its environmental footprint by using organic and plant-based ingredients as well as eco-friendly packaging.
- **Ayaan Hassan - San Jose, CA, Aidlyai:** An app that connects patients to urgent cares. AI analyzes a user prompt in order to assess the condition of the patient, as well as any additional requirements, then combs through a database of urgent cares to find a suitable one by filtering the patient's current location and insurance.
- **Lelani Liang-Funes - San Francisco, CA, Indepenkits:** A monthly subscription service that sends weekly material and challenges to your house, teaching life skills to children with autism.
- **David Gutierrez - Los Angeles, CA, Anyone Can Game:** The mission of ACG is to provide those who are diagnosed with hearing impairment with a more immersive, augmented, and life-like experience when they play video games. The product is a video game synchronized smart jacket that includes and uses a raspberry pi mini-computer and a built-in haptic system to allow inputs to activate vibration motors, augmented sound, and in-game synchronized lights.

The West's Solonia Allen took home runner-up and Lucio Hightower-Rojas took home the top prize and title of National Entrepreneur of the Year. Both students come from Los Angeles Urban League. Judges included business professionals from Citi, PayPal, Zuora, LeoLabs, EY, Independent Artists Group (IAG), and NFTE's very own alumni business, Groom Guy. Lucio was awarded \$10,000 plus a 45-minute mentorship session with Daymond John, star of Shark Tank ABC and the CEO of FUBU The Collection, LLC, a \$6 billion hip-hop apparel company. As runner-up, Solonia was awarded \$2,500.

## WINTER 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

### EY Connect Day

Thanks to our longtime partner EY, NFTE students in Los Angeles and San Francisco had the opportunity to pitch their business ideas during EY Connect Day on November 8. Across both cities, 51 students presented their businesses to 25 EY volunteers serving as judges and coaches. We're incredibly grateful to the EY teams in both regions for their time, talent, and unwavering support of the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders.



### Field Trip to Wilson Sonsini

On November 19, 25 students from Abraham Lincoln High School spent the day at Wilson Sonsini's Palo Alto office. With support from 12 dedicated volunteers, students refined their business plans before hearing from four guest speakers who shared real-world insights on innovation, resilience, and leadership.

## SPRING 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

### PayPal Coaching Session at PayPal

On March 20, NFTE students from Silver Creek High School (East Side Union High School District) visited PayPal's San Jose campus for an inspiring day of entrepreneurship and career exploration. With support from 21 incredible PayPal volunteers, students took part in business plan coaching, networking activities, and a fast pitch competition where they received real-time feedback. The day also included a campus tour and lunch, making it a memorable experience full of connection, confidence-building, and innovation.

### Coaching Session with Lincoln High School

On March 21, NFTE hosted a virtual coaching session with students from Lincoln High School, bringing together 15 dedicated volunteers ranging from Citizens Business Bank, Ross, First Citizens Bank, and Comerica. Volunteers offered personalized feedback and guidance to help students strengthen their business ideas and prepare for upcoming pitch competitions. We're grateful to our incredible partners for investing their time and expertise in the next generation of entrepreneurs!

### San Francisco Unified District Competition/Judging

NFTE hosted the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Competition on April 5, where 60 students from Lincoln High School and Galileo High School pitched their business ideas in hopes of advancing to NFTE's Youth Entrepreneurship Competition Semi-Final round. With the support of 8 dedicated volunteer judges, students showcased an incredible range of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.



### Judging Session with Carson High School

On April 10, NFTE partnered with City National Bank for a judging session with students from Carson High School. Five enthusiastic volunteers from City National Bank stepped in to evaluate student business pitches, offering insightful feedback and support. We're thankful for their commitment to fostering youth entrepreneurship and helping students build confidence and real-world skills.

### Modesto Field Trip and Business Plan Judging

We were excited to expand our reach to Modesto with a field trip and business plan competition at Gregori High School! Seven volunteers joined us to support students as they pitched their business ideas, offering thoughtful feedback and encouragement. We're thrilled to see NFTE programming taking root in Modesto and can't wait to continue building momentum with the Gregori community.

## PayPal Field Trip – San Jose

31 students from Independence High School had the exciting opportunity to visit PayPal's San Jose campus on May 8 for a day of career exploration and skill-building. After touring their office, students engaged in a lively speed networking session with 31 PayPal volunteers, followed by one-on-one mock interviews to sharpen their professional communication skills. One student said about their time at PayPal: "I had an amazing experience... the feedback and compliments I received were invaluable in how I move forward in pursuing my chosen career."

## EY Women in Business

On May 16, 15 students from Downtown Magnets High School joined NFTE for EY's Women in Business event in Downtown Los Angeles. With support from five incredible EY volunteers, students took part in a dynamic panel discussion featuring women leaders at EY, where they had the opportunity to ask thoughtful questions and hear about diverse career journeys. The day also included a networking session, mock interviews, a tour of EY's offices, and some well-earned snacks!

## 2025 U.S. Bank Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Thanks to our incredible partnership and support from U.S. Bank, NFTE hosted a virtual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge for our community partners at Los Angeles Urban League, ICEF View Park Preparatory High School, YWCA, and U.S. Bank employees. The event held 16 student businesses with 22 U.S. Bank employees as VIP judges. The three winners of the event included Lychee Li with Mischee Film, Denise Higgins with Lemon Love, and Melanie Canizales with Mundial Cafe. Lychee and her business Mischee Film competed at the SoCal Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge hosted at Loyola Marymount University. Lychee advanced and will be competing at the National Competition in New York City this October. We are so grateful to our friends at U.S. Bank and their support of our community partners around Los Angeles.

## 2025 Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (RYEC)

The Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (RYEC) series, the culminating event series to the end of our Entrepreneurship courses for NFTE students, took full swing starting May 6, 2025. Nearly 48 esteemed judges took to the toughest challenge of reviewing over 130 student business plans during our RYEC Quarterfinals. 24 of those students from across California competed virtually and were ranked by 21 judges in the Semi-finals. The final event was our Regional Finals, held on May 31st at Loyola Marymount University, where our top five student businesses competed for a chance to win the National Competition in New York City. We were honored to have esteemed judges from EY, sidelines.vc, Adobe, Truist, U.S. Bank, and SoLA Impact join us. We are incredibly honored to share our 2025 NFTE West Finalists, who we look forward to supporting as they compete for the grand prize in New York this October:



- **Andre Cheng, Florence Nightingale Middle School, Los Angeles – Mindi:** A mental health app that is low pressure, accessible, and anonymous.
- **Jamie Jimenez, Florence Nightingale Middle School, Los Angeles – Soberband:** A wristband that uses light technology to accurately measure a driver's blood alcohol content.
- **Lychee Li, The Los Angeles Urban League - Mischee Film:** A production company that will produce 12 short films per year, each one focusing on a specific perspective or type of crime.
- **Marian Natividad, Silver Creek High School, San Jose - NativiMix:** Hawaiian-inspired snacks with aloha.
- **Cicily Yu & Raymond Cheung Wu, Abraham Lincoln High School, San Francisco - NatureHue:** A sustainable, chemical free, non-toxic marker for individuals wanting an eco-friendly alternative.





# LOOKING AHEAD

Your support of NFTE West has enabled us to continue serving deserving students throughout the West. We anticipate achieving the following for the 2025-2026 program year:

1. NFTE West plans to deliver NFTE programming with fidelity to more than 2,000 students.
2. Provide ongoing support and training to at least 30 certified entrepreneurship teachers.
3. Engage at least 200 volunteers who will serve as advisors, guest speakers, business plan coaches, and competition judges for NFTE students

# THANK YOU

By igniting the entrepreneurial mindset in youth from under-resourced communities, NFTE helps them more fully engage in school, discover future career possibilities, and prepare to become the next generation of diverse entrepreneurs. NFTE works with various public and private sector partners to bring its uniquely effective brand of experiential, project-based learning to young people. NFTE students are supported by trained teachers, coached by dedicated volunteers, and motivated and rewarded by opportunities for internships or the chance to vie for seed capital at a series of annual business plan pitch competitions.

By training students to think and act like entrepreneurs, NFTE inspires a passion for learning and prepares young people for whatever path they choose, whether that is college, career, startup, or a dynamic future of work that they shape for themselves. Supporting NFTE means investing in a more equitable and prosperous future. NFTE empowers our future entrepreneurs, innovators, problem-solvers, and leaders— the future of our ever-changing economy.

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Memorial Trust

