



What Success Looks Like

2025 Impact Report



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NYPACE 2025 Impact Report



Dear Friends and Supporters of NYPACE,

As I look back on 2025, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for all that NYPACE has accomplished. Our mission—to stimulate job creation and economic opportunity in under-served communities by mobilizing pro bono professionals to support local entrepreneurs—comes to life most clearly through the stories of the individuals we serve and the impact they create.

Entrepreneurs like **Shenna Vaughn** and **William Bentley**—along with **Dr. Bernardo Flores**, **Edgar Zephyrine**, **Precious L. Williams**, and many others—are why we do this work, and we’re always looking for others with similar passions. 2025 marked the second year of our 2024–2026 Strategic Growth Plan, *Operation Doing More while Reaching More*, and our continued progress demonstrates how strategic ambition and community commitment can drive real, measurable impact across our region.

With 52% of our entrepreneur participants reporting that they added employees after completing the NYPACE program, we are on solid ground in our mission to drive community-level impact in the year ahead. We’re proud to see our ecosystem broaden, our impact deepen, and our mission resonate with local entrepreneurs and the corporate community that powers our volunteer network.

As we enter the third year of our strategic plan, we’re committed to sustaining our growth, amplifying our results, and reaching more entrepreneurs than ever before. Together, we’re demonstrating that equitable access to business expertise can transform individual enterprises and entire communities.

Thank you for being an essential part of shaping what success looks like for local entrepreneurs from under-resourced communities. I look forward to working with you in 2026 and beyond as we continue advancing our mission and programmatic efforts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I. Souare', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ibrahima S. Souare
Executive Director, NYPACE

Success Takes on Many Forms at NYPACE

Success looks different for every entrepreneur, but one common thread is momentum. Clearer strategies, stronger decision-making, and focused action lead to measurable growth over time.

In 2025, we worked with businesses at different stages, in different industries, facing different challenges. What they share is a commitment to growth and a willingness to learn what it takes.

Who We Serve

While every business is unique, patterns emerge: the typical participant is a six-year-old business generating \$150,000–\$200,000 in annual revenue. Most operate in professional services (38%), child care/health care/education (14%), or retail (11%), sectors critical to community stability across the five boroughs.

Eighty-four percent are minority-owned, 73% are woman-owned, and 84% operate in or serve under-resourced communities. These businesses exemplify NYPACE’s mission: supporting entrepreneurs as they grow sustainable enterprises that create jobs, generate tax revenue, and reinvestment in their neighborhoods.

2025 Participants at a Glance

Average revenue

**\$150,000–
\$200,000**

Business age

6 years

Ownership

84%
Minority-owned

73%
Woman-owned

Top industries

Professional services (38%)

Child care/health care/education (14%)

Retail (11%)



How We Engage: 211 Engagements Across Four Programs

Flagship Program: A cohort-style group of advisor teams that work with entrepreneurs to produce clearly defined deliverables over an eight-week period.

Day of Service: Employees from our corporate partners serve as skilled volunteers, working with NYPACE entrepreneurs in a 3–5 hour engagement to address specific business goals and conclude with recommended action steps.

Legal Sprints: Short intensive sessions with trusted law firms offering pro bono expertise on New York and federal small business regulations.

Workshop Learning Series: A classroom-style learning experience, typically hosted by NYPACE entrepreneur or advisor alumni.

With 376 entrepreneur engagements achieved over the first two years of our Strategic Plan, we're on track to surpass our 3-year goal of 500 engagements, needing just 124 in 2026 to reach the target.

The Flagship Experience

Many outcomes highlighted in this year's report come from our Flagship Program, where growth-oriented entrepreneurs are paired with a team of three volunteer advisors from leading New York City corporations.

Over eight weeks, entrepreneurs and advisors work together on a clearly scoped project, producing practical deliverables—financial models, pricing tools, capability statements, operational frameworks—that continue to inform business decisions long after the program ends.

Flagship Success Looks Like This

One year after completing the Flagship Program, the impact on businesses and their communities is outstanding:



34% average revenue growth, positioning under-resourced entrepreneurs for long-term success



52% added a full- or part-time employee



\$638,000 in new financing secured



\$5.7M in government contracts awarded



94% of entrepreneurs said the program empowered them to make strategic growth decisions



88% of 2020 program participants remain in business today, helping keep local economies strong

Learn how you can help fuel the next cohort of entrepreneurs by visiting nypace.org/donation.

“I felt like my team was really rooting for me!”

—LaShawna Harris, Shared Talent, LLC



“This is such an effective, well designed, and important program; the ways in which it is structured will undoubtedly result in real impacts to underserved communities.”

—Kenneth Shults, Connected Health Solutions, Inc.



“I really enjoyed being able to do a strategic check-in on my business on a weekly basis.”

—Adeola Wright, Julu, LLC



The Power of Connection

For small businesses, growth is often accelerated through relationships. By creating intentional spaces for entrepreneurs to build networks, NYPACE helps business owners move toward breakthroughs that reshape what’s possible for their companies.

In 2025, we significantly expanded opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect in person, recognizing that meaningful relationships are often built face-to-face.

Attendance at NYPACE networking and fundraising events grew from 286 in 2024 to nearly 500 in 2025. Our annual fundraising & celebration event welcomed 275 people, our largest gathering to date.

Expect the Unexpected

At a Mets game, **Joseph Miranda** of **NoteFull**, a Summer 2025 Flagship Program participant, met his project advisors in person for the first time. Their conversation led to the launch of Joseph’s second business.

Longtime entrepreneur **Melissa Gallardo** of **Bonita Fierce Candles** understands that effective networking can lead to chance encounters that change lives. “NYPACE throws the best events, from networking and mentorship to pop-ups and working with incredible partners,” says 2025’s NYPACE Entrepreneur on the Move.

Investing in Our Own

Whenever possible, NYPACE procures food, goods, and services directly from NYPACE entrepreneurs, transforming relationships into real revenue opportunities. From event-related services to vendor partnerships, this approach ensures that dollars generated through NYPACE activities circulate back into the very businesses we support. In fact, 2025 participant **BOUNCE Marketing & Consulting** guided the strategy and design of this report.

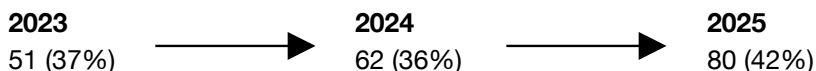
By choosing NYPACE entrepreneurs as service providers, not just participants in our programs, NYPACE reinforces a model of shared growth where connection leads to tangible economic impact.

Volunteers: The Heart of NYPACE

NYPACE depends on corporate professionals who volunteer their time, expertise, and perspective in service of entrepreneurs. Our volunteers work directly with business owners, bringing real-world experience to complex challenges and translating insights into practical, lasting deliverables.

Wonder Women

In 2025, we welcomed the highest number of female Flagship program volunteers in NYPACE's history—80 women. This milestone reflects our commitment to shaping a more inclusive ecosystem for the entrepreneurs we serve.



2025 Volunteer Contributions

Corporate volunteers

242



Pro bono hours

6,400+



Total value

\$1.4 million+



Entrepreneurs satisfied

86%



Arnav Mody: NYer of the Week

Volunteer Advisor **Arnav Mody** was named **NYer of the Week** by Spectrum News spotlight on January 27, 2025. The feature, which also included NYPACE entrepreneur **Dawn Kelly of The Nourish Spot**, explained how sustained, skills-based volunteer engagement strengthens the broader fabric of New York City.

In the Headlines: Agata Staszak Mentors Female Fight Club

In June 2025, News12 did a powerful story on NYPACE contributions to the economic vitality of the Bronx, featuring volunteer advisor Agata Staszak and entrepreneur Johanna Edmondson.

Ready to Start Your Leadership Journey?

NYPACE is a place where professional expertise can grow into meaningful community engagement and leadership opportunities. Volunteering with NYPACE is meaningful and flexible, with opportunities for engagement that fit a wide range of professional schedules and interests. To learn more, visit nypace.org/volunteer-advisors

Partners Who Open Doors

Collaborating with corporations, peer organizations, and community-based providers extends the reach and relevance of our programs while ensuring entrepreneurs receive the right support at the right time. Our partnerships allow us to meet business owners where they are, fill service gaps, and create meaningful pathways between entrepreneurs and institutions invested in their success.

PARTNER VOICES

“Cleary Gottlieb is extremely proud of its long-standing pro bono partnership with NYPACE. We congratulate NYPACE on another year of inspiring work with New York City entrepreneurs!”

—David Leinwand,
Partner, Cleary Gottlieb

Nicol Squash, for example, operated by a 2024 NYPACE entrepreneur, hosted our Squash Tournament and turned an entrepreneur-led business into a gathering place for peers, advisors, and supporters. The law firm **Polsinelli**, a 2024 and 2025 corporate sponsor, welcomed our community into their offices for a Speed Networking event. **Citi** provided in-kind support with game-day tickets. And **PayPal** provided valuable space for our Impact Forum for the second year.

Day of Service: Corporate Engagement

One of the most tangible ways corporate partners engage with NYPACE is through our Day of Service program, an intensive half day of strategic collaboration around real-world business challenges. The program provides entrepreneurs with actionable insights in a short timeframe while giving partner organizations a powerful opportunity to engage employees and drive visible social impact. Read about our outcomes and contact us for partnership opportunities at nypace.org/partners.

Community Partners: Building Pathways Together

Our impact is strengthened through a network of organizations across New York City that collaborate with entrepreneurs at different stages and with specialized offerings. We’re grateful to these partners for their responsiveness to referrals, their openness in sharing program details, and their trust in referring entrepreneurs well-suited for NYPACE programs.



(Left) Entrepreneur Dawn Kelly and Associate Board member Arnav Mody featured in a Spectrum News segment. (Right) Volunteer Agata Staszak with entrepreneur Johanna Edmondson after a Flagship finance project.



Events are catalysts for business and community outcomes

New and returning volunteers and entrepreneurs gather at Polsinelli in NYC.

New Local Partner: Community Enterprise Accelerator (CEA)

Led by **Tim Gamory**, Bronx-based CEA shares our commitment for helping under-resourced entrepreneurs thrive. In 2025, NYPACE advisors supported entrepreneurs in CEA’s six-month program, with several graduates later joining our Flagship program. Together, the two programs allow entrepreneurs to tap into services from technical assistance providers, lenders, government agencies, and corporations.

Partnership Expansion: Cleary Gottlieb

A top-level partner for more than a decade, this law firm expanded its commitment in 2025 by launching the first **NYPACE Legal Clinic**. Cleary Gottlieb’s continued leadership exemplifies how enduring partnerships evolve to meet entrepreneurs’ changing needs. Partner **David Leinwand** received the **Corporate Social Impact** award at our annual event.

Thank You to All Our Community Partners



Sustainability at Scale

With an eye toward strengthening our foundation for long-term growth, we diversified funding sources and made structural changes that allow us to serve entrepreneurs more efficiently.

Greater Financial Stability

Since 2021, NYPACE has expanded support from sponsors, grants, and individual donors, reducing exposure to any single funder.

Diversified growth drove total revenue to approximately **\$1.4 million in 2025**, keeping us on track to **achieve our three-year strategic goal of raising \$1.5 million annually by 2026**.

| REVENUE GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION, 2021–2025 | 2021 | 2025 |
|---|--------|--------|
| Sponsorships | 28% | 55% |
| Grants | 18% | 21% |
| Individual Donations | 4% | 14% |
| Corporate Partnerships | 50% | 10% |
| Total Revenue | \$907K | \$1.4M |

Five New Sponsors Step Up

With more sponsors supporting our mission in 2025, NYPACE continues to decrease its reliance on any single funding source.

Join us in welcoming the newest companies to our sponsor network!

Accordion
Bain & Company
KKR
MUFG
Notch Partners

Delivering Operational Excellence

In 2025, NYPACE established two departments—Programs and Corporate Initiatives and Events—to strengthen operations and scale our reach.

The Programs Department manages entrepreneur growth across our flagship cohort program, legal sprints, workshops, and networking events. **Shrima Singh** joined as Director of Programs, and **Oliver Allen-Cummings** became our first Program and Impact Coordinator.



Above: Shrima Singh and Oliver Allen-Cummings

The Corporate Initiatives and Events Department develops strategic partnerships for skills-based volunteerism and coordinates our two major annual community events.

This new structure positions NYPACE to serve more entrepreneurs while deepening the quality of support we provide.

New to the Boardroom

Three new members joined our executive board in 2025, bringing fresh perspectives that further reinforce NYPACE's governance and long-term sustainability.

- **Kenrick Fraser** is a valued partner who works in the Social Impact and Employee Engagement field. He brings strategic leadership to our new Corporate Initiatives efforts and vast experience in skills-based corporate volunteerism.
- **Thomas Donley** and **Talaal Azeem** started out as NYPACE volunteers and soon found themselves on our Associate Board. In 2025, they earned Executive Board seats through their proactive support across programs, recruitment, network expansion, and deep commitment to NYPACE's mission.

2026 Sneak Peek: Strategic Plan Goals in Sight

As we head into the third and final year of our Strategic Growth Plan, *Operation Doing More while Reaching More*, we're well on our way to reaching our goal of 500 entrepreneur engagements over three years. Within the past two years, these entrepreneurs have added or retained more than 230 full-time employees in their communities.

In 2026, we'll be focused on supporting businesses that want to make their first hire or expand their full-time staff for greater community impact. We'll also be investing in key growth infrastructure, such as human resources, technology support and protection, and accounting and compliance management.

NYPACE staff and Board Chair Dan Zamlong celebrate a successful fundraiser in NYC.



Flagship Program Success Stories



From Star Speaker to Operational Expert

Precious L. Williams is truly a force of nature. As a 13-time national elevator pitch champion and a Shark Tank alum, the Founder of **Perfect Pitches by Precious** knows exactly how to take a sales pitch from unfocused to undeniable. Her advisors describe her as pure joy and a total delight to work with because her high energy is simply infectious. Yet even with a resume that includes training Fortune 100 giants like Google and BMW, Precious realized that her external success needed stronger internal support. She came to NYPACE for clear guidance on hiring, insurance, and determining which services to cut so she could focus on scaling her most profitable offerings.

The collaboration proved to be the perfect strategic pause for her fast-moving career. Working with advisors, Precious was able to streamline her business model and double down on what she does best. As a result of the program, she had the confidence to aggressively pursue a \$125,000 contract, which was nearly 67% of her entire revenue for the prior year. She praised her advisor team for their help, saying, “Y’all gave me the confidence to go hard.” With her back-office operations now as polished as her stage presence, Precious continues to secure lucrative corporate contracts and inspire professionals everywhere to own their stories.

—LYNDA CORREA, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER

BROOKLYN •
\$125,000 contract won



BRONX •

64% revenue increase



From Educator to Seven Figure CEO

Anyone who meets **Dr. Bernardo Flores** immediately feels his gregarious energy and genuine passion for connecting with others. After a lifelong career in education, Dr. Flores decided to elevate his path in 2019 by launching **Quality Wet Paint, LLC**, which provides industrial, commercial, and residential painting services.

His daughter Alondra serves as Vice President and is learning the ropes of entrepreneurship right alongside him. While the business was growing, Dr. Flores felt that missing a formal business education was holding them back. He turned to NYPACE for support by participating in the Summer 2024 Flagship program and two EY Days of Service with a specific goal to master project profitability.

This collaboration sparked a major shift for the family duo. Working with advisors like Joshua Elman, who cherished the opportunity to share knowledge he often took for granted, Dr. Flores implemented rigorous financial tracking systems. Dr. Flores now beams when describing how he uses spreadsheets

to track finances in real time to ensure every job is a winner “I can now anticipate if a project will produce a profit, a loss, or break-even,” he says.

The results speak volumes about their hard work: Quality Wet Paint has seen a 64% increase in revenue and have won multiple government contracts totaling \$1 million. Dr. Flores calls the experience a blessing and, true to his social nature, he never misses a chance to champion NYPACE to other entrepreneurs looking to make their own leap to success.

—LYNDA CORREA, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER



From Artists to Change Agents

Vaughn Bentley Creative was founded by NYC-born artists **Shenna Vaughn** and **William Bentley**, who came together to build a creative agency grounded in excellence and community impact. Formally established as a business partnership, the agency was designed to create opportunities not only for the founders but also for other artists—especially those from marginalized communities.

Vaughn Bentley Creative provides a wide range of art and design services, including mural design, fine arts, graphic illustration, artist representation, art gallery curation, art education, and community beautification. Their work spans both private and public clients, with notable collaborations with JFK Airport, Hudson News, the New York Botanical Garden, and many others.

Over the years, Vaughn Bentley Creative received targeted support from NYPACE through multiple initiatives, including the 8-week Flagship Program and Day of Service engagements. NYPACE teams supported the entrepreneurs in refining project pricing models and conducting competitor benchmarking, helping strengthen their financial strategy and competitive positioning.



As a result of this support, Vaughn Bentley Creative doubled its revenue in 2025 compared to 2024, fueling continued growth and impact. Reflecting on the experience, co-founder Shenna Vaughn shared, “The best thing about this program is having the opportunity to be paired with industry leaders in real time, who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise to help me grow my business.”

This growth enables Vaughn Bentley Creative to deepen its community impact by bridging fine and commercial art, expanding access to paid opportunities for artists, and reinvesting in projects that use art as a tool for healing, pride, and social change. By building a sustainable and thriving business, Vaughn Bentley Creative is able to empower the next generation of artists in New York City and beyond while ensuring their creative work continues to create lasting economic and cultural value in the communities they serve.

—STEPHANIE BOMBACI, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE INITIATIVES AND EVENTS

QUEENS ·

2x revenue growth



MANHATTAN •
3 new hires

From Good to Great

When **Edgar Zephyrine** joined NYPACE's Fall 2024 Flagship Program, his primary challenge was financial clarity. While **EJZ Engineering PLLC** generated steady revenue of approximately \$350,000 annually, Edgar lacked a clear understanding of which services were driving profitability and how that information could inform strategic growth decisions. Through his NYPACE project, Edgar worked with advisors to build a customized profit-and-loss tool that tracked revenue and costs by trade type, including mechanical, electrical, and MEP services. For the first time, Edgar could clearly see where revenue and profit were coming from, and more importantly, where it *should* come from.

The results were immediate and significant. Within a year of completing the program, EJZ Engineering more than doubled its annual revenue. As demand increased, Edgar expanded his team, hiring three new employees to support growing project volume and operational capacity.

Beyond revenue growth, the project had a ripple effect across Edgar's business operations. With guidance from NYPACE advisors, he strengthened the company's proposal language and payment terms, improving cash-flow consistency and reducing delays in client payments. He also began intentionally pursuing public-sector contracts, shifting from a business that almost entirely served small, private customers to one increasingly positioned for institutional and government work. EJZ Engineering is projected to surpass \$1 million in revenue in 2026, a milestone Edgar once viewed as out of reach.

—RASHEEDA FRAZIER, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER

Thank you 2025

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to our Sponsors

NYPACE Team

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- Randy Moonan, Sims Cummis & Gross, *Board Secretary*
- Talaal Azeem, Apollo Global Management
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- Lynda Correa, *Senior Program Manager*
- Rasheeda Frazier, *Senior Program Manager*
- Christine Seguritan, *Senior Manager, Corporate Initiatives and Events*
- Oliver Allen-Cummings, *Program and Impact Coordinator*
- Catherine Dodge, *Development Consultant*
- John Citti, *Business and Finance Consultant*

Data in this report: Data on NYPACE project participants is collected through a series of assessments administered via telephone and online using standardized forms. Each meets a minimum 70% response rate to be reported here. In 2025, 56 projects were launched and 55 were completed, resulting in 55 entrepreneurs and 181 volunteers eligible for a project closing survey. The project impact survey is conducted 12 months after project close and the 2025 survey included the 47 eligible entrepreneurs from our 2024 projects. Impact over time is calculated by linking the application (pre-program) data with the impact survey data (post-program). Closed businesses are excluded from all one-year change calculations. The pro bono hours valuation is calculated using the methodology created by Taproot Foundation and Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose®

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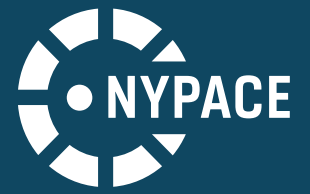
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2025