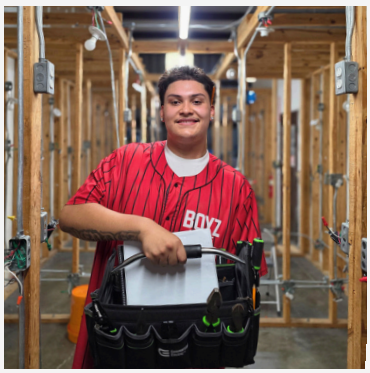
BridgeYear

# Annual Report

2024–2025









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## 2024–2025 **Board of Directors**

**Susan Bailey-Newell**
Board Member

**Tony Duran**
Treasurer

**Joe Martin**
Board Member

**Bryant Black**
Board President

**Kate Fowler**
Vice President

**Vanessa Ramirez**
Board Member

**Victoria Chen**
Co-Founder & Executive Director

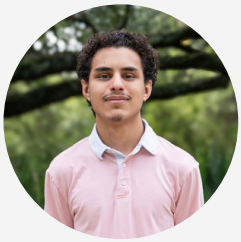
**Veronica Frederick**
Board Member

**Sally Thayer**
Board Member

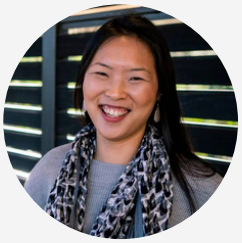
**Victoria Doan**
Co-Founder & Secretary

**Dawn Hawley**
Founding Board President

# 2024–2025 Staff



**Angel Castillo**
Career Navigation Fellow



**Victoria Chen**
Executive Director & Co-Founder



**Geraldine Denasty**
Career Exploration Program Manager



**Allena Grant**
MorePathways® Outreach Coordinator



**Angy Hernandez**
Warehouse Coordinator



**Ana Lewis**
Career Exploration Program Coordinator



**Carlee Morgan**
Chief Operating Officer



**Fabeah Newton**
Chief Program Officer



**Evelyn Prado**
Director of Student Experience



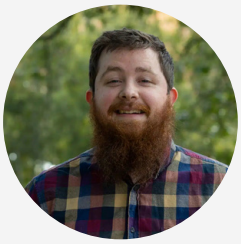
**Imani Raglin**
Operations Manager



**Alex Reisinger**
Career Navigation Program Manager



**Hugo Rivera**
Career Build Manager



**Tyler Rogers**
Career Exploration Program Coordinator



**Gustavo Sanchez**
Career Navigation Coordinator



**Mel Seymour**
Director of Special Projects



**Tramaine Spencer**
Partnerships Manager



**Avery Suber**
Development Manager



**Jocelyne Treviño**
Communications Manager



**Adrian Venegas**
Senior Build Coordinator



**Tanita Patton**
Director of MorePathways®

# Leading with Vision, **Inspiring Success**

*Dear Friends,*

Nine years ago, BridgeYear was founded on a simple but powerful belief: every young person deserves access to a future filled with possibility, regardless of their GPA, zip code, or background.

We saw firsthand how many students were navigating high school graduation without a clear path forward. Despite their potential, they lacked awareness of careers in high-demand fields that didn't require a four-year degree. We believed then, and still do, that with the right support, students can chart a course toward economic mobility and long-term success.

Since our founding, BridgeYear has become a trusted connector between youth and opportunity. We've empowered thousands of young people to explore meaningful careers, enroll in short-term training programs, and take tangible steps toward stable, well-paying jobs. Along the way, we've built lasting partnerships with schools, training providers, employers, and community organizations working to expand access to these pathways.

But the need is growing. Too many students still leave high school without a plan. The postsecondary landscape remains difficult to navigate, and the systems that should create seamless connections often fall short, particularly for those facing the greatest barriers. Meanwhile, Houston employers are seeking reliable, skilled entry-level talent and struggling to find it.

That's why BridgeYear is setting a bold vision for the decade ahead. The 2024–2025 fiscal year marked a key chapter in that journey, and this Annual Report highlights the progress we've made:

- **Career Test Drive® Simulations:** We deepened corporate partnerships and brought hands-on, industry-aligned experiences to even more students. Our goal next year is to double the number of employer partners engaged.
- **Career Cohort Program Expansion:** Now in its third year, this program continues to link students to certifications. This year, we proudly launched our first Registered Apprenticeship.
- **MorePathways® Growth:** A digital campaign drove a significant increase in users discovering BridgeYear-vetted local training programs that are affordable, accessible, and aligned with in-demand careers.
- **Postsecondary Pathways Conference:** Our fifth annual event introduced educators to local training providers and spotlighted regional workforce needs and high-growth careers.

These milestones aren't just numbers. They represent students finding direction, gaining confidence, and taking meaningful steps toward a stable career. And none of it would be possible without you.

Whether you're an employer, donor, educator, or volunteer, your support fuels this movement and helps shape a stronger, more inclusive workforce for Houston.

As we look ahead to BridgeYear's 10th anniversary, we're investing in what works: robust apprenticeship pathways, innovative technology to engage communities, and an expanded career exploration model that meets students where they are.

With gratitude,

**Victoria Chen**

*Victoria Chen*

Co-Founder & Executive Director



"Every student we support is a step toward a stronger, more skilled local workforce."





# We equip students with the tools to thrive in today's workforce.

By focusing on underserved youth from low-income communities, BridgeYear ensures every student graduates high school with a clear path to stable employment and economic mobility.



# Who We Are

At BridgeYear, we believe every young person deserves a fair chance to build a better life through a meaningful career. That starts with access to in-demand jobs that offer economic mobility and long-term stability. Based in Houston, Texas, the fourth-largest city in the U.S., we equip students with essential knowledge about high-paying, in-demand career paths, instill belief in their potential, and connect them to the training and education they need to launch successful careers.

**The Challenge:** According to a 2024 Gates Foundation report, 45% of young people agree that "getting a college degree is not worth the investment, because I cannot afford to go into debt when I am not guaranteed a future career path." Yet many still don't know what other options exist or how to pursue them. Our education and workforce systems continue to prioritize four-year college pathways, leaving students without clear guidance on alternative routes. Rising tuition costs and growing student debt have made the traditional college degree a riskier investment, and the disconnect between education and workforce realities creates unnecessary barriers to economic mobility.

## Our Mission

BridgeYear connects underserved youth to careers and educational pathways that provide economic stability and independence.

## Our Vision

Our vision is for all students to graduate with clear access to high-growth, in-demand career pathways, ensuring economic mobility and opportunity are within reach for everyone.

**Our Solution:** BridgeYear is reimagining the education-to-workforce pipeline. We are the only nonprofit in Houston dedicated to serving students of all academic achievement levels, offering pathways to short-term industry certifications, apprenticeships, and associate degrees that lead to well-paying careers without requiring a four-year degree. Our comprehensive approach combines realistic, hands-on career simulations with direct access to training programs and personalized workforce guidance. Through this model, students can explore career options, build confidence in their abilities, and take tangible steps toward stable, in-demand careers.

### To achieve our work, we must:

**Broaden BridgeYear's reach** in Houston so more students, teachers, and parents are aware of high-quality non-four-year pathways.

**Break down barriers** to entry for Houston youth to allow for a more seamless transition from graduation to enrollment in skills training.

**Leverage MorePathways®** as a dynamic, go-to tool for connecting students and adults to workforce programs.

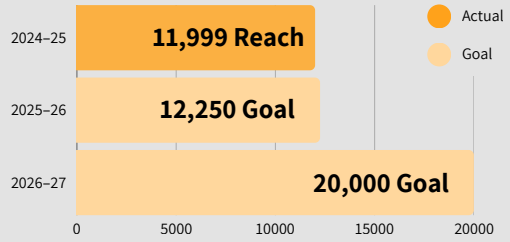
**Strengthen BridgeYear's infrastructure** by attracting and retaining our team, diversifying revenue, and investing in technology.



# Strategic Plan: Year 1

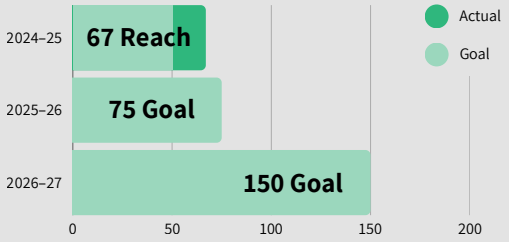
Year 1 (2024–2025) of BridgeYear's 3-Year Strategic Plan focused on laying the groundwork for long-term impact. We built systems, strengthened our infrastructure, and expanded opportunities for Houston's youth, bringing each of the plan's four pillars to life. Below, we showcase the progress achieved across each pillar during this foundational year.

## Pillar 1: **Broaden Reach**



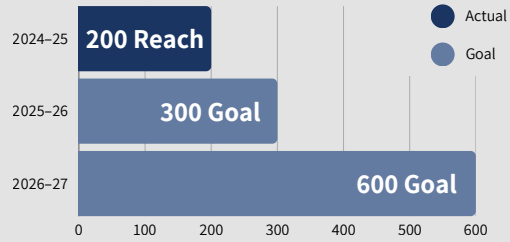

BridgeYear reached **11,999 youth** at CTD Fairs in 2024–2025, nearly hitting our **12,000 target**.

## Pillar 2: **Break Down Barriers**




BridgeYear enrolled **67 high school graduates** in a Career Cohort, exceeding our **50 target**!

## Pillar 3: **Leverage MorePathways®**




BridgeYear reached **200 trainings posted** in 2024–2025 on MorePathways®.

## Pillar 4: **Strengthen Infrastructure**

**Fundraising Cost per Dollar**

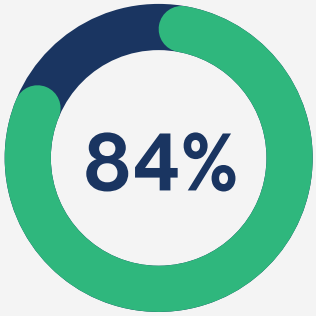
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BridgeYear maintained **low fundraising costs** while supporting program growth.

## Looking Ahead

In 2024–2025, we laid the foundations for our programming. In 2025–2026, we will put those systems into action by reaching more students, strengthening partnerships, and delivering programs with greater consistency, setting the stage to expand our impact across the Greater Houston area in 2026–2027.

# Who **We Serve**




of our students are economically disadvantaged




of our students identify as Black or Hispanic/Latino




of schools served are considered Title 1 schools

| 54 | 12,100+ | 16 |
|---|---|---|
| Middle & High Schools Served | Youth Served | Unique Schools Districts Served |

## Helping Students Discover What's Possible and How to Get There

BridgeYear's programs are designed to help students explore and navigate career pathways, providing them with the tools and experiences necessary to make informed decisions about their futures. Our approach is divided into two key components:

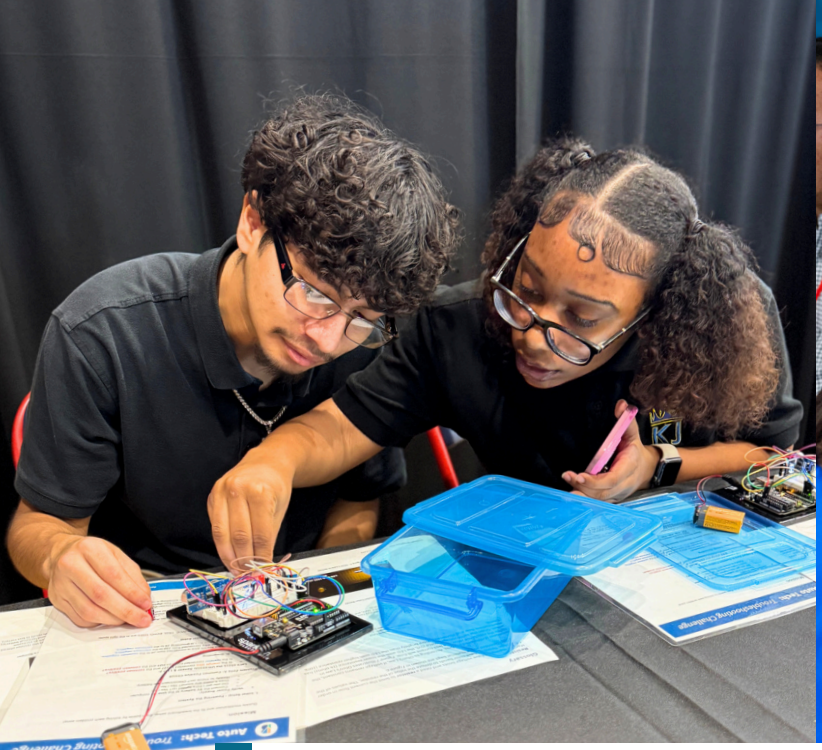
### Career Exploration

Students engage in hands-on simulations of high-growth, in-demand careers to discover interests and imagine new possibilities they may not have considered.

### Career Navigation

Students receive tailored support, from exploring non-four-year degree options to enrolling in training programs and building the workplace skills needed to thrive.







# Hear from an Educator

"Your presence [at Chavez High School] brought an energy that continues to buzz throughout the campus! Students were genuinely inspired by the opportunities and pathways you introduced, and many are still talking about the connections they made with your team. Your dedication to guiding young people through transitional years was evident, and it truly made a difference in their experience."

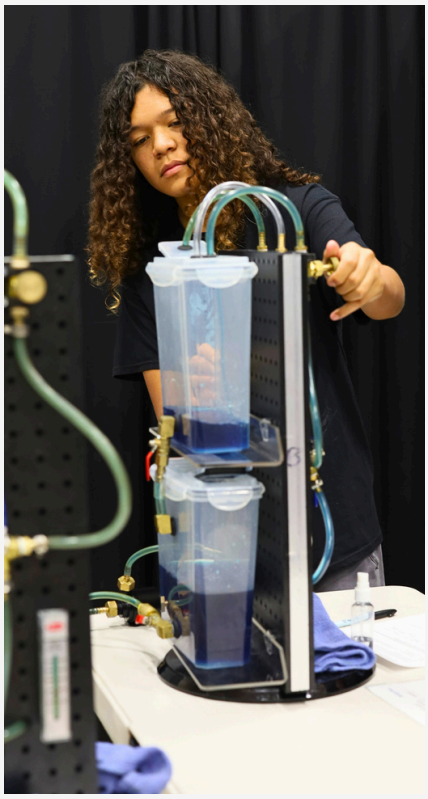
— **Keanda Fuller**, Regional Program Coordinator at CASE for Kids, Harris County Department of Education (HCDE)





# Instill **belief** in students to pursue paths aligned with their interests and broader life goals.

## Career Test Drive® Program



**Belief in a better future starts with exposure.** It's about seeing what's possible and realizing, "I belong there." That's the spark **BridgeYear's Career Test Drive® (CTD) Fair** ignites. For many students, high-demand careers like surgical technologist or refinery operator aren't just unfamiliar; they're completely unknown. These roles offer stability, growth, and purpose, but too often go unmentioned in traditional classroom settings.

That's why BridgeYear's CTD Fairs transform school gyms into hands-on career simulations. Students rotate through immersive experiences co-designed with industry partners, trying real-world tasks such as preparing surgical tools, wiring circuits, or assembling manufacturing components. These experiences spark curiosity, build confidence, and help students envision themselves in careers they hadn't considered.

In the 2024–2025 school year, BridgeYear reached over **11,900 students** across **71 events**, including both school-based and community-hosted CTD Fairs. We also introduced two new career simulations: **utility pipefitter** developed with CenterPoint Energy and **biological technician** developed with Texas Medical Center, and in collaboration with H-E-B, updated the existing **pharmacy technician** simulation. These new simulations expand our reach into essential industries that offer real pathways to upward mobility.

Students leave with more than exposure. They walk away with a sense of possibility. When a student says, **"I didn't know this job existed, but now I want to do it,"** we know we're planting the seeds of belief that can lead to lasting change.

## What is the Impact?

**68%** of students left the CTD Fair interested in pursuing one or more of the careers they experienced

**75%** of students believe at least one of the careers they explored could lead to professional, financial, or lifestyle stability

**93%** of students said the CTD Fair helped them better understand which careers align, or don't align, with their interests

### Corporate Partners

The Friedkin Group
Gulf States Toyota
TMC Innovation
CenterPoint Energy
Phillips 66
H-E-B
ASG Accelerated Solutions Group
Memorial Hermann
Honeywell

"I've been here for 8 years and have not seen something this **valuable and meaningful** for our students. They are so **engaged and excited!** In class, they usually ask to go to the bathroom or get water, but here at the Fair, they want to stay as long as possible. **Our kids deserve this.** Thank you so much for working with our school."

— **Bobbie Freeman**, School Operations Manager at KIPP Nexus Middle

# Equip students with **knowledge** about soft skills needed to succeed in today's workforce.

## Essential Soft Skills for Success (ES3s)

**Employers often struggle to find entry-level talent equipped with the leadership and soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace. That's where BridgeYear's Essential Soft Skills for Success (ES3) conference comes in.** Designed as the next step for high school seniors inspired by BridgeYear's CTD Fair, ES3 addresses this gap by giving students practical experience in professional environments before they even enter the workforce.s before they even enter the workforce.

Hosted this year at the Houston offices of **Gulf States Toyota** and **Honeywell**, the conference immersed students in real-world settings to build essential workplace skills. Through BridgeYear's interactive workshops, students participated in mock interviews with industry professionals, crafted resumes that reflect their strengths, and practiced articulating their experiences for their personal pitches. They also explored workplace expectations, from pay structures to professional norms, preparing them to confidently navigate their first jobs.

This year, **124 students** from **five schools** across **four Houston-area districts**, Houston ISD, Harmony Public Schools, Spring Branch ISD, and Aldine ISD, participated in an ES3 conference. They left with practical skills, real-time feedback, and the confidence to thrive in today's job market. By equipping students with both workplace experience and essential soft skills, the ES3 conference not only empowers youth but also helps employers access talent that's truly workforce-ready.

"I learned how to properly make a resume and how an interview would sort of look and feel like. Due to this, I feel confident that I will do well in a real-world interview."

— **Jacqueline R.**
High School Senior

## What is the Impact?

**92%** of students felt more confident writing a professional email after participating in the **Professional Communications Workshop**

---

**93%** of students reported that the **Resume Building Workshop** gave them the tools they needed to create or update their resume right away

---

**94%** of students said the **Interview Skills Workshop** helped them better understand how to structure strong responses to interview questions.





# Provide access to training and educational programs crucial for launching a good career.

## Career Cohorts

### What is the Impact?

**67** Class of 2025 graduates enrolled in a Career Cohort, taking the next step toward postsecondary training

---

**96%** Career Cohort participants completed their short-term training or pre-apprenticeship

**10 students are not included in the completion percentage, as they are actively training and on track to finish by the end of fall.*

---

**73%** Career Cohort certificate-holders are now employed or continuing their education





**Access to opportunity means little without a clear next step and the support to take it.** In Houston, young adults from low-income families earn just $33,000 on average by age 35, making the road to economic stability feel out of reach. **BridgeYear's Career Cohorts** provide graduating seniors with a direct, supported route into in-demand, well-paying careers through short-term training programs and registered apprenticeships.

Through partnerships with leading training providers and community organizations, including Texas Technical Trade School, Memorial Assistance Ministries, Wesley Community Center, Per Scholas, The Training Center of Air Conditioning & Heating, Uncharted Territory Solutions, and Royalty Welding Academy, students access hands-on learning experiences and a variety of high-growth career pathways.

In 2025, **67 recent graduates enrolled in Career Cohorts**. Of those, 55 completed certifications, while 10 are actively training and on track to finish by the end of fall.

### BridgeYear Launches First Registered Apprenticeship!

This year marked a milestone: the launch of our first Registered Apprenticeship in Automotive Technology, created with Gulf States Toyota and Houston City College's Gulf Coast Region Apprenticeship Hub.

- **17 students completed a summer pre-apprenticeship** with hands-on automotive training and BridgeYear workshops on financial literacy, goal setting, and workplace readiness
- **11 students advanced into the two-year earn-and-learn program**, gaining hands-on experience and industry credentials while providing employers with skilled, workforce-ready talent

Career Cohorts turn potential into progress. By earning industry-recognized credentials and gaining real-world experience, students step confidently into meaningful careers that provide economic mobility. At the same time, local employers gain access to skilled, job-ready talent prepared to meet Houston's workforce needs.

# Hear from an Automotive Technician Apprentice

"This experience has been more engaging than traditional school because the classes are smaller and focused... My dad first got me into cars, and rebuilding my uncle's Suburban after an accident showed me how much I love tackling challenges and bringing cars back to life... This program has been incredibly beneficial in preparing me for future apprenticeships at Toyota dealerships and supporting my goal of becoming a master technician."

— **Kevin Zavala**, Houston ISD Graduate Class of 2025, Automotive Technician Apprentice at Don McGill Toyota





# Equipping educators with the knowledge to guide students toward in-demand careers

## Postsecondary Pathways Conference

BridgeYear's 5th Annual Postsecondary Pathways Conference (PPC) convened **over 190 educators, counselors, and postsecondary advisors** at TMC Innovation for a full day of hands-on learning and workforce-aligned insight. Presented by ConocoPhillips and hosted in partnership with Good Reason Houston, UpSkill Houston, and TMC Innovation, the conference focused on translating labor market trends into student opportunity.

Participants engaged in:

- **Panels on workforce trends and economic shifts** shaping the future of career advising and postsecondary planning
- **Exploration of emerging "credentials of value"** and how they align with Houston's evolving workforce needs
- **Direct connections with local training providers** offering short-term, low-cost programs in healthcare, trades, IT, and more

Educators left with practical tools, regional data, and new community connections to help students discover career pathways beyond the traditional four-year degree, pathways that offer stability, purpose, and upward mobility.

"I greatly appreciate the data regarding the value of a postsecondary certification. Learning about the percentage of individuals that will need a certification in Texas, as well as the percentage of respondents in certain surveys who were more satisfied with their employment with some sort of postsecondary certification, was especially valuable."

— **Morgan Harsh**
Parris Foundation

## What is the Impact?

**99%** of participants reported that they would recommend PPC to their colleagues

**92%** of participants agreed they have a network of short-term training providers they can connect their students to after PPC 2025

**91%** of participants agreed they have a stronger understanding of existing and emerging pathways into the workforce after attending PPC 2025





# BridgeYear's Regional Tool for Career Navigation

**MorePathways®**

**Houston's leading platform for discovering short-term training programs**

## A Digital Gateway to Economic Opportunity

**MorePathways®** is a free, mobile-friendly website that connects youth, families, and advisors across Greater Houston to short-term, affordable career training programs that lead to in-demand jobs, no four-year degree required.

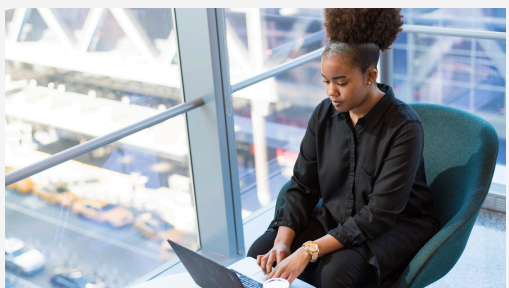
Built by BridgeYear, this tool helps young people move from curiosity to clarity, with access to hundreds of local programs in high-growth fields like healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and the skilled trades.

> Unlike broader data platforms, MorePathways® features only programs **vetted by BridgeYear** for quality, affordability, and alignment with real job opportunities, turning information into actionable pathways for youth across Greater Houston.

## Meeting a Critical Need

For many young people not pursuing college, the path forward is unclear. Quality training options are scattered, hard to compare, and often hidden. According to Houston's Public Education Snapshot 2025, only 20% of high school graduates go on to earn a living wage within six years of graduation, highlighting the urgent need for clearer, more accessible pathways to career success.

MorePathways® bridges that gap by bringing vetted, local opportunities together in one place. In 2024–2025, more than **34,800 unique visitors** explored the site, most from underserved Houston ZIP codes, connecting with **200 short-term trainings**.



## How We Vet Programs

Each program listing on MorePathways® must meet the following standards for quality and accessibility:

**Program Length**
Education equal to or less than two years

**Wages**
Leads to a livable, entry-level salary

**Credentials**
Industry-recognized, transferable certification

**Affordability**
Free or low-cost for participants

## Expanding Impact Across the Region

MorePathways® allows BridgeYear to extend its reach beyond direct student programs. By creating a public, mobile-friendly tool that supports students, families, educators, and workforce partners, we're scaling our impact and creating broader access to opportunity in Greater Houston and beyond.

## In the 2024-2025 school year, MorePathways® recorded:

**34,800+** Unique Visitors

**23,900+** Views of Training Programs

**2,800+** Clicks on "Apply" buttons

# Our Generous Supporters

We are grateful to every individual, family, and organization that supports BridgeYear. Every gift, at every level, helps students access meaningful career pathways and build lasting opportunities.

## $1,000,000+
The Powell Foundation

## $500,000 to $999,999
The Cullen Foundation

## $100,000 to $499,999
Anonymous
ConocoPhillips
General Motors
Gulf States Toyota / The Friedkin Group
Marvy Finger Family Foundation
Phillips 66
The Brown Foundation, Inc.
The Jerry C. Dearing Foundation

## $50,000 to $99,999
CenterPoint Energy Foundation
H-E-B
Honeywell
Janet Clark
Memorial Hermann Health Systems
The Baxter Trust
The William Stamps Farish Fund

## $25,000 to $49,999
Camber Collective
Clutch City Foundation
Dawn and Robert Hawley
Halliburton Charitable Foundation
Jack H. and William M. Light Charitable Trust
John Johnson
Karen Arnold
TDECU
Tony Duran

## $10,000 to $24,999
Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas
Bradley and Kimberly Dennison
Capital One
Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, Inc.
DEWALT
EQT Foundation
Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation
Good Reason Houston
Jonathan Luk
KCRCW Foundation
Michael and Rebecca Cemo Foundation
Nordstrom Cares
Norton Rose Fulbright
Posey-Glickert Foundation
River and Pines Fund
Spindletop Community Impact Partners, Inc.
The Clayton Fund, Inc.
The Tapeats Fund
Wellbore Integrity Solutions

## $5,000 to $9,999
Chevron Black Employee Network Social Investment Fund
CRC Family Charitable Foundation
George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation
Houston ISD Foundation
Jonathan Violin
Sally and Ed Thayer
Stephanie Langenstein
TeriAnn Mahony-Miller
The Always Do Good Fund
The Harry S. & Isabel C. Cameron Foundation
Veronica Frederick

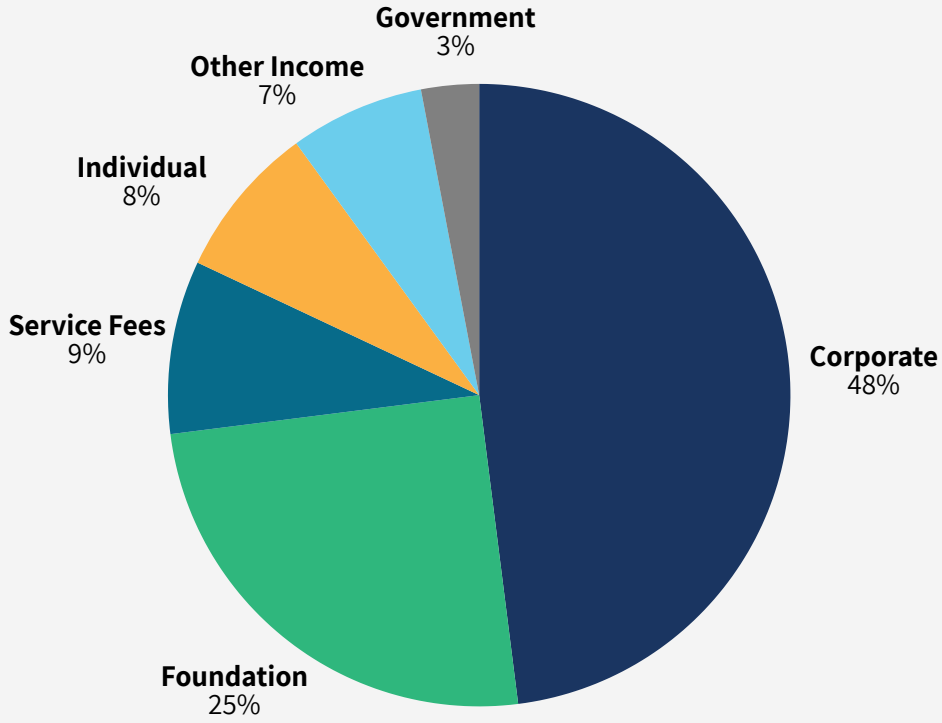


# Our Financial Summary

Our strong financial foundation is underpinned by diverse revenue streams and multi-year awards that fund pieces of our work through Fiscal Year 2028.

## Statement of Activities

as of June 30, 2025

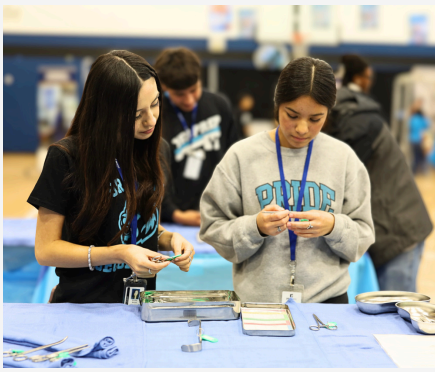



## Operational Expenses Breakdown

as of June 30, 2025







# Together, we're building a future where **every student has a path to economic mobility.**

**Support**
BridgeYear.org/ways-to-give

**Follow**
@BridgeYear
@BridgeYearProgram