

Magnolia Project's Career Catalyst Program

Magnolia Project's semester-long, Career Catalyst program connects 11th-12th graders with mentors from local businesses to work on hands-on, professional projects, incentivizing school attendance and graduation, and helping students understand how their academic work connects to economic opportunity.

Magnolia Project's Career Catalyst program unfolds in three phases, over the course of one academic semester:

01 PRE-WORK CURRICULUM (10-15 sessions):

Through Magnolia Project's Career Catalyst curriculum, aligned with Common Core English Language Arts standards, students identify their strengths and career interests, explore the workforce needs in their communities, and build workplace readiness skills.

02 IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE (5 full school days):

Students are matched with a mentor from a local business, complete a professional interview, and work alongside them on a hands-on, industry aligned professional project. Students also meet with representatives from local two- and four-year colleges, union apprenticeship programs, and other postsecondary training pathways.

03 REFLECTION AND PLANNING (5-7 sessions):

Students return to school and complete Magnolia Project's Common-Core aligned Career Catalyst post-work curriculum. They reflect on their experience, present what they learned, and create a plan for life after high school graduation.

Impact

Students gain a clearer understanding of their strengths, discover new career interests, and make informed decisions about their future, reducing the time and money wasted pursuing pathways not aligned with their passions or goals, entering higher wage careers earlier.

In the 2025-2026 school year, 73% of students said Magnolia Project helped them better understand themselves and their goals, and 99% of students reported new or different career interests after participating in Magnolia Project's Career Catalyst program.

"Magnolia prepared me for my career because it gave me a chance to explore being in a real job without risk. It let me explore my options before I had to make a decision on what I wanted to do in life."

--Career Catalyst
student at Marin
Oaks High School





Magnolia Project

We turn small town potential into economic opportunity



About Magnolia Project

Magnolia Project advances economic opportunity through three interconnected place-based programs: Career Explorations & Career Catalyst, the Next Step Scholarship, and Homegrown Ventures.

In partnership with public schools, young people and local entrepreneurs, Magnolia Project's programs create a cycle of opportunity and community reinvestment. Students who explore careers become scholars and entrepreneurs. The businesses they join or launch become the next generation of mentors and scholarship sponsors. That's how small-town potential turns into lasting economic opportunity.

Founded in 2022 by Gia Biaggi, a former teacher and graduate of Sonoma County public schools, Magnolia Project has connected more than 1,000 7th-12th public school students with over 100 trained and compensated industry mentors and entrepreneurs through its school-based programs. In the 2026-27 school year, Magnolia Project will serve 700 students in 21 public schools through its school-based Career Explorations and Career Catalyst programs, award four Next Step Scholarships to alumni, and lay the groundwork for the Homegrown Ventures entrepreneurship program.

OUR PROGRAMS

- **School Based Programming:** Magnolia Project's semester-long, Common-Core aligned Career Explorations and Career Catalyst programs connect students in 7th-12th grade with mentors from local businesses to work on industry aligned projects, helping them understand how school connects to economic opportunity, and build a personalized plan for life after high school.
- **The Next Step Scholarship:** Magnolia Project offers flexible \$1,500–\$3,000 scholarships to help alumni cover the costs of postsecondary education and training outside of traditional four year college, so they can enter higher-wage careers earlier with little to no debt.
- **Homegrown Ventures:** Magnolia Project partners with an experienced organization to give young entrepreneurs ages 18–35 the training, mentorship, technical assistance, and capital to launch or grow businesses that generate income and create jobs in their communities.



Where We Work: Magnolia Project is proud to serve small towns and communities outside major metropolitan areas. It currently operates in Sonoma, Marin, and Mendocino counties in Northern California, with plans to expand to communities nationwide.



Learn More: Magnolia Project is excited to expand to new communities and work with new partners. Visit magnolia-project.org or reach out to info@magnolia-project.org to connect with our team and start a conversation.