



PROJECT
SANKOFA

2025 Annual Report

PROJECT SANKOFA

For Us. By Us. To Us. Through Us

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Community,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with deep gratitude—for our students, educators, families, partners, and the dedicated team who continue to believe in what is possible when community, culture, and commitment come together.

2025 was a year of both growth and grounding for Project Sankofa. In a time when many organizations were asked to do more with less, we remained rooted in our mission: to create affirming, transformative spaces where Black students and educators are seen, supported, and empowered to thrive. We did not rush the work—we strengthened it. We listened more closely, partnered more intentionally, and stayed accountable to the communities we serve.

Across our programs—from the African American Scholars Project (AASP), to EMERGE, to SEEN, and to The Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW)—we witnessed the power of culturally responsive education, wellness, and community-centered support in action. Students found language for their identities. Educators found community and clarity. Families found spaces where their voices mattered and their experiences were affirmed. These outcomes are not accidental; they are the result of intentional design, deep relationships, and a belief that excellence and equity must coexist.

This year also marked important organizational milestones. We are celebrating **10 years** since the launch of our signature program, the African American Scholars Project (AASP). Also, we expanded partnerships, strengthened internal systems, and invested in the people who make this work possible. We grew not just in numbers, but in capacity—ensuring that our impact is sustainable, not situational.

This report is more than a collection of data points or highlights. It is a reflection of lived experiences, shared responsibility, and collective progress. It tells the story of what happens when we commit to doing this work with care, integrity, and courage.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with clarity and purpose. The need remains great—but so does our resolve. We are excited about what lies ahead and deeply thankful to each of you who continue to walk alongside us.

Thank you for believing in this work. Thank you for trusting us with your students, your stories, and your partnership. And most importantly, thank you for being part of a community that continues to move us forward—together.

With gratitude and resolve,

Dr. Maisha Beasley
Executive Director | Project Sankofa



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Project Sankofa continued to advance its mission to create affirming, culturally grounded spaces where Black students, educators, and families are seen, supported, and empowered to thrive. Across student programs, educator pathways, and wellness-centered initiatives, the organization focused on deepening impact while strengthening the systems needed for long-term sustainability.

Through core programs—the African American Scholars Project (AASP), EMERGE, Sister Employment & Empowerment Network, and The Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW)—Project Sankofa served students across middle and high school, supported aspiring and early-career Black educators, invested into the development of our early career Black women, engaged families as partners, and collaborated with schools, districts, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations.

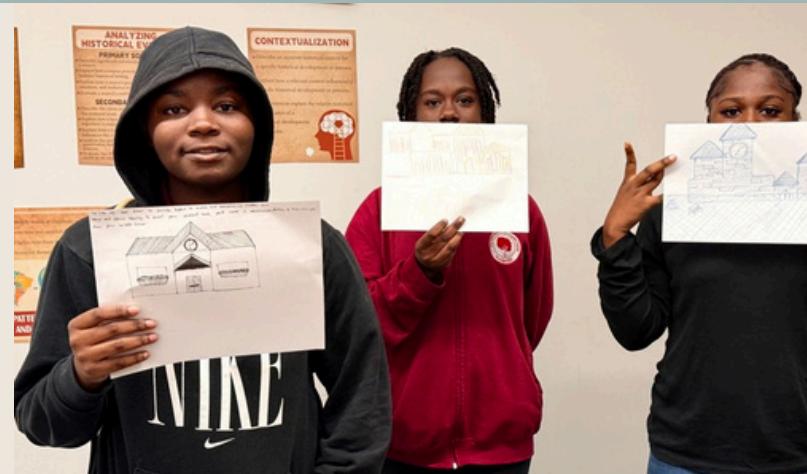
Rather than prioritizing scale alone, 2025 was a year of intentional growth. The organization strengthened program quality, deepened partnerships, and integrated wellness and care as foundational—not supplemental—elements of its work. Students reported stronger identity, belonging, and confidence. Educators experienced community and clearer pathways to remain and lead in the profession. Families engaged in spaces that honored culture, voice, and shared responsibility.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026

- Deepening student impact, with AASP as an anchor program
- Strengthening educator recruitment, retention, and leadership through NBEW
- Centering wellness and healing through culturally relevant programs
- Expanding and deepening strategic partnerships
- Building organizational capacity to support sustainable growth



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2025 AT A GLANCE

- Programs: AASP, EMERGE, SEEN, NBEW
- Focus Areas: Student identity & belonging, educator pathways, wellness, community partnerships
- Communities Served: Black students and future educators across the state.
- Partners: Schools, districts, universities, and CBOs

OUR PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Project Sankofa's work is grounded in the belief that students, educators, and communities thrive when they are **seen, affirmed, and supported**. In 2025, our programs collectively served as entry points, anchor spaces, and long-term pathways for growth—meeting people where they are while building toward what's possible.

Program	Purpose	Core Focus Area	Who We Serve
African American Scholars Project (AASP)	Build identity, belonging, and academic confidence for Black students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural affirmation and identity development College and career exploration Student voice and community building Family engagement and shared learning 	Black middle and high school students and their families
The Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW)	Build and sustain a pipeline of Black educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and credentialing Paid placements and school partnerships Mentorship and professional development Retention and leadership pathways 	Aspiring and early-career Black educators, partner schools, and districts
E.M.E.R.G.E. (Education, Mentorship, Empowerment, Relationships, Growth, Excellence)	Provide a year-long leadership and mentorship journey for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership development and self-efficacy Mentorship and trusted adult relationships College, career, and life readiness Experiential and community-based learning 	High school students seeking sustained mentorship and leadership growth
Sisters Employment & Empowerment Network (SEEN)	Cultivating a reciprocal ecosystem of leadership through intergenerational mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reciprocal and Intergenerational Mentorship Leadership Readiness and "Cup Filling" Community Centered Leadership Culturally Responsive Facilitation 	Aspiring and early-career Black educators, partner schools, and districts



OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

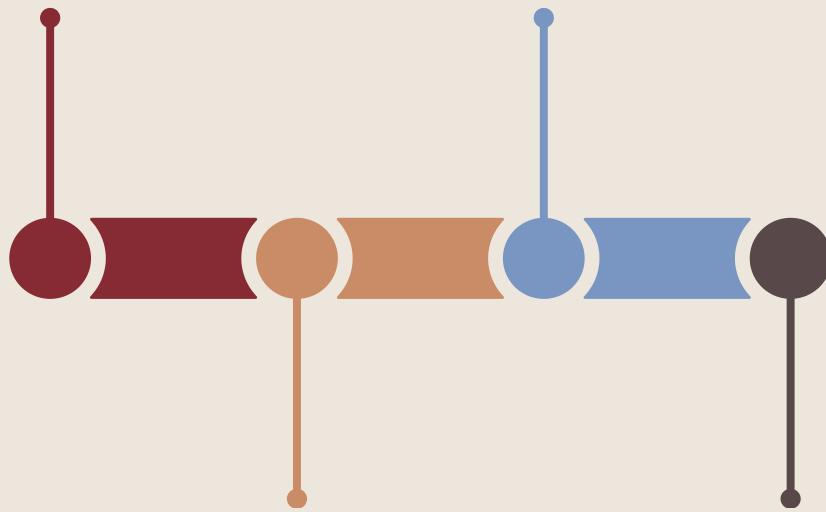
While each program serves a distinct purpose, together they create a continuum of support—from student identity and belonging, to educator preparation and retention, to community wellness and sustainability. This integrated approach allows Project Sankofa to address both immediate needs and long-term systems change.

2024 - 2025

2017

Launched African American Scholars Program (AASP)

- *Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW) in the Sacramento, SF Bay Area, and Los Angeles*
- *Inaugural NBEW Cohort (2025)*
- *Launch of EM.E.R.G.E. and Sisters Employment & Empowerment Network (SEEN)*



2021

Project Sankofa is established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

2026

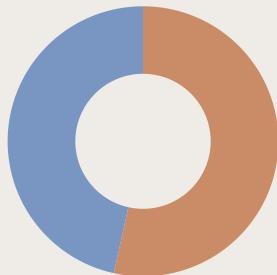
NBEW deepens impact in Southern California



2025 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS & KEY METRICS

Project Sankofa deepened its reach and strengthened its impact by focusing on quality, consistency, and community-centered outcomes. While each program serves a distinct role, our collective work reflects a shared commitment to affirmation, access, and long-term success.

IMPACT AREA: STUDENTS SUPPORTED



TOTAL STUDENTS

399

Spring 2025
Fall 2025



A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

African American Scholars Project (AASP)

- In Spring 2025, we supported **84** students across middle and high school programs.
- In Fall 2025, we supported **96** students across middle and high school programs.

Rites of Passage Program

- In Fall 2025, we focused on a Deep-Impact Model, providing **5** students with wraparound mentorship that extended beyond weekly check-ins.

Young Women's Program (YWP)

- In Spring 2025, we supported **101** high school students and **23** pre/early professional career professionals (18-24 y.o.).
- In Fall 2025, we supported **80** students across four sites.

E.M.E.R.G.E.

- Launched in Fall 2025, and we supported our first group of **10** students

IMPACT AREA: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



TOTAL FAMILIES

16

All families participated in workshops, events, and learning spaces.

IMPACT AREA: EDUCATORS SUPPORTED



**EARLY-CAREER
BLACK EDUCATORS**

5



**EDUCATIONAL &
NONPROFIT LEADERS**

27

We supported leaders from the Social Justice Learning Institute.

- Ed Equity Program Directors (2)
- Program Managers (5)
- Course instructors (9)
- College & Career Counselors (11)

IMPACT AREA: PARTNER SITES



TOTAL

6

We thank our partners for a meaningful and collaborative year.

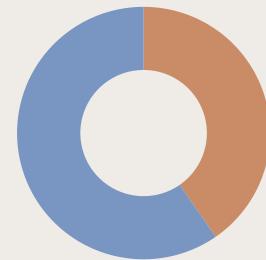
- Washington Unified School District
- Monta Vista High School
- SEED LA
- Black Women for Wellness
- Social Justice Learning Institute
- School on Wheels

IMPACT AREA: PROGRAMS DELIVERED

TOTAL

4IMPACT AREA: WORKSHOPS & SESSIONS DELIVERED

TOTAL

114

- Spring 2025
- Fall 2025

IMPACT AREA:
COLLEGE & CAREER
EXPERIENCES

TOTAL

12

- College tours (6)
- College & Career Panels (6)

WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF THIS WORK

Students

- Reported stronger sense of identity, belonging, and confidence
- Gained exposure to college pathways, leadership skills, and cultural affirmation
- Experienced learning spaces where they felt seen and valued

Educators

- Received sustained mentorship, professional development, and community support
- Built clarity around purpose, practice, and long-term career pathways
- Entered or remained in the profession with stronger support systems

Families & Communities

- Engaged in affirming spaces that centered culture, voice, and shared learning
- Built stronger relationships with schools and community partners
- Experienced increased trust and connection through consistent engagement

PROGRAM SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

Program	Purpose
African American Scholars Project (AASP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded culturally responsive workshops and college exposure opportunities Increased student participation and family engagement at partner sites
The Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced recruitment and onboarding of aspiring Black educators Strengthened partnerships with schools, districts, and higher education institutions
E.M.E.R.G.E. (Education, Mentorship, Empowerment, Relationships, Growth, Excellence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched or strengthened year-long youth leadership and mentorship cohorts Created consistent touch points for identity development and skill-building
Sisters Employment& Empowerment Network (SEEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created a system of one to one mentorship with Black Women for Wellness's Rites of Passage program. Resulting in greater self efficacy and self esteem of the ladies being mentored Collected and assembled hygiene kits for young women in the Los Angeles area with SEEN mentors bi-annually Created a system of support through intergenerational panelist presentations from high school through early career



WHY THESE NUMBERS MATTER

Each data point represents a person, a relationship, and a moment of possibility.

Together, these outcomes reflect more than reach—they demonstrate how intentional, culturally grounded programming can shift experiences, expand access, and support lasting change.



STORIES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Behind every data point is a lived experience. In 2025, Project Sankofa's impact was felt not only in numbers, but in moments of connection, confidence, and transformation. The following stories reflect the voices of those closest to the work—students, educators, and families.

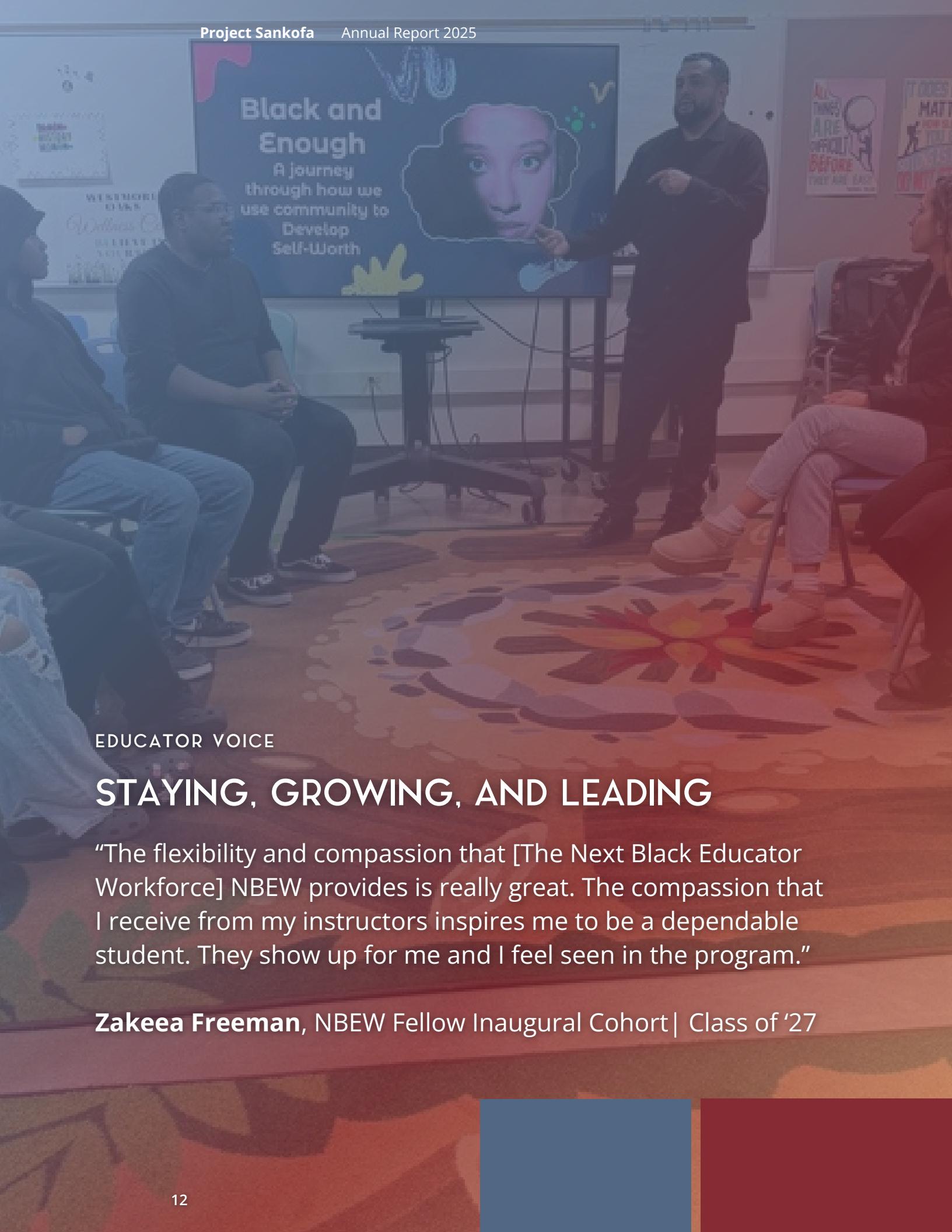
STUDENT VOICE

FINDING IDENTITY & BELONGING

We took a group of 23 middle school students to visit the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. After the day ended, we asked them this question:

AASP Staff member: "Who wants to go to college?"

AASP Scholars: "WE DO!" (each hand rose up with each student cheering with joy)

**EDUCATOR VOICE****STAYING, GROWING, AND LEADING**

"The flexibility and compassion that [The Next Black Educator Workforce] NBEW provides is really great. The compassion that I receive from my instructors inspires me to be a dependable student. They show up for me and I feel seen in the program."

Zakeea Freeman, NBEW Fellow Inaugural Cohort | Class of '27

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Project Sankofa's impact is made possible through deep, intentional partnerships rooted in shared values and mutual accountability. In 2025, we continued to strengthen collaborations with schools, districts, universities, and community-based organizations to ensure our programs were responsive, sustainable, and community-centered.

Rather than operating in isolation, we work alongside partners to co-design experiences that meet real needs—while honoring the cultural, historical, and relational context of each community we serve.

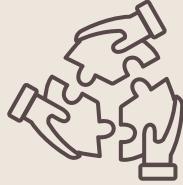
OUR PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

We prioritize partnerships that are:



VALUES-ALIGNED

Grounded in equity, cultural affirmation, and student-centered practice



COLLABORATIVE

Built through shared planning, reflection, and problem-solving



SUSTAINABLE

designed to strengthen systems, not create dependency



ACCOUNTABLE

guided by clear expectations, communication, and outcomes



THIS APPROACH ALLOWS US TO MOVE BEYOND ONE-TIME PROGRAMMING TOWARD LONG-TERM IMPACT.

KEY PARTNERSHIP AREAS

SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

Through partnerships with schools and districts, Project Sankofa delivers culturally responsive programming that supports students, engages families, and strengthens school communities. These partnerships allow us to integrate programming directly into school environments while supporting educators and administrators in fostering inclusive climates.



COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

CBO partnerships deepen our reach and relevance by anchoring our work in trusted community spaces. Together, we expand access to mentorship, leadership development, wellness supports, and culturally affirming experiences beyond the classroom.

HIGHER EDUCATION & EDUCATOR PREPARATION PARTNERS

Through collaborations connected to The Next Black Educator Workforce (NBEW), we work with higher education partners to recruit, prepare, and support aspiring Black educators—aligning credentialing, mentorship, and placement efforts with the realities of today's classrooms.



WHY PARTNERSHIPS MATTER?

Our partnerships ensure that:

- Students experience consistent support across school, home, and community
- Educators are placed in environments prepared to support their success
- Families are engaged as partners—not observers—in their children's education
- Programming reflects lived experience, not assumptions

What's to come:

As we move into 2026, we remain committed to strengthening existing partnerships while welcoming new collaborators who share our vision. Together, we are building ecosystems where students thrive, educators stay and lead, and communities are affirmed and supported.



Partner Locations



Our Partners

- Alameda County Office of Education
- Black Women For Wellness
- Green Dot Public Schools
- Monta Vista High School
- School on Wheels
- Social Justice Learning Institute
- SEED LA
- University of the Pacific
- Washington Unified School District

THESE RELATIONSHIPS ALLOW PROJECT SANKOFA TO SCALE IMPACT **WITHOUT COMPROMISING CARE.**

2026 PRIORITIES

As we look toward 2026, Project Sankofa remains grounded in what we know works—relationship-centered, culturally affirming, and community-led approaches—while continuing to evolve to meet emerging needs.

The year ahead represents a moment to deepen impact, strengthen systems, and expand opportunity without losing sight of our core purpose.



OUR 2026 FOCUS AREAS

- **Deepening Program Quality & Reach:** In 2026, we will continue refining our programs to ensure consistency, fidelity, and meaningful outcomes across all sites. This includes strengthening curriculum, facilitator support, and participant experience across AASP, EMERGE, SEEN, and NBEW.
- **Strengthening Educator Pathways:** Through The Next Black Educator Workforce, we will expand recruitment, placement, and retention efforts—while continuing to advocate for school environments where Black educators are supported, valued, and positioned to lead.
- **Centering Wellness & Care:** We will further integrate wellness, mental health, and healing-centered practices to ensure students, educators, and families are supported as whole people.
- **Expanding Strategic Partnerships:** We will deepen existing partnerships and cultivate new collaborations with schools, districts, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations that share our commitment to equity and sustainability.
- **Building Organizational Capacity:** To support long-term impact, we will continue investing in internal systems, data practices, and team development—ensuring that growth is intentional, sustainable, and aligned with our mission.
- **Our Commitment Moving Forward:** Project Sankofa enters 2026 with a clear understanding that meaningful change requires both vision and discipline. We remain committed to listening deeply, learning continuously, and acting with integrity—always guided by the communities we serve.

THE WORK AHEAD IS
AMBITIOUS, BUT WE BELIEVE
IT IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT IS
COLLECTIVE.

TOGETHER, WE WILL
CONTINUE BUILDING SPACES
WHERE STUDENTS THRIVE,
EDUCATORS STAY AND LEAD,
AND COMMUNITIES ARE
AFFIRMED AND SUPPORTED.



PROJECT SANKOFA TEAM

OUR BOARD



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Blakely-Reavis**
Member



Rick Wan
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**Dr. Chrissy
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Member

GRATITUDE & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Project Sankofa's impact in 2025 was made possible through the collective commitment, care, and belief of many individuals and partners. This work is deeply relational, and we are grateful for the community that continues to walk alongside us.

- **Our Students & Families:** First and foremost, we thank the students and families who trusted us with their stories, their time, and their hopes. Your voices, resilience, and brilliance are the heart of this work and the reason we remain committed to creating spaces where you are seen, affirmed, and supported.
- **Our Educators & Participants:** To the educators—aspiring, emerging, and experienced—who chose to grow with us: thank you for your courage, leadership, and dedication to students and communities. Your commitment to staying, learning, and leading continues to shape the future of education.
- **Our Partners:** We are deeply grateful to our school, district, higher education, and community-based organization partners. Your collaboration, trust, and shared vision make it possible to deliver programming that is responsive, meaningful, and grounded in community context.
- **Our Team:** To the Project Sankofa team—thank you for your heart, discipline, creativity, and care. This work requires both excellence and empathy, and you continue to show up with integrity and purpose every day.
- **Our Board of Directors:** We thank our Board of Directors for their leadership, guidance, and stewardship. Your commitment to governance, accountability, and long-term sustainability strengthens our organization and our impact.
- **Our Funders & Supporters:** We are grateful to the funders and supporters who invest in this work and believe in its long-term vision. Your partnership allows us to deepen impact, strengthen systems, and remain accountable to the communities we serve.



As we close this year's report, we do so with gratitude and resolve. The work ahead remains urgent—but it is also possible because it is shared.

Together, we will continue building spaces where students thrive, educators stay and lead, and communities are affirmed and supported.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF PROJECT SANKOFA'S JOURNEY.





This report reflects the collective work of students, educators, families, partners, and staff who believe in the power of culturally affirming, community-centered education.



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