



ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Our Work In Review

Just as the Manzanita plant supports our region's natural ecosystem, **Manzanita Works** designs and builds local community benefits to help working families with their daily lives. Our model imagines and builds multi-stakeholder consortiums to address the shared concerns of mutual aid or *essential workers*. At the core of our work is addressing the expressed needs of low-income essential workers. Working together, we can meet current and future community needs at practical economies of scale that reflect where and how people live and work in our region.

Welcome to our inaugural Annual Report.

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Letter from our Chief Executive Officer	Page 4
Organizational Highlights	Page 5
Portfolio Overview	Page 6
Financial Report	Page 11
Donor Acknowledgements and Testimonials	Page 12

All photos published in this Annual Report are original photography belonging to Manzanita Works.

MANZANITA WORKS

Highlights from the year



"To have the support of Manzanita has made such a difference. The people are amazing, and it gives me such a life to have someone in my corner!"

- An Educator

An Introduction

Our report starts with a letter from our Chief Executive Officer, Mila Cavala, followed by organizational highlights, an overview of our portfolios, key program highlights, and a financial report that provides insight into our activities within Philanthropic Ventures Foundation's fiscal sponsorship along with our transition to independent activities. We conclude with program participant testimonials and an acknowledgement of thanks for our donors.

From the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Collaborators, Supporters, and the Working Families we serve,

Welcome to Manzanita Works' first Annual Report!

It is an honor to be working closely with members of the critical workforce in our mission to support the welfare of workers and their families to live fruitful, dignified lives.

Ours is a broad and bold vision that was crafted over the years—through conversations, collaborations, pilots and projects. We have designed a model for collaboration that is unique and tailored to lived experience and local knowledge. Like the manzanita plant after which we are named, we have the capacity to support abundant life with adaptation to regional conditions. A myriad of challenges may interrupt many of us in our ability to show up for work, but when invited, Manzanita can work with you to navigate those challenges, close gaps, and build bridges in the form of community benefits.

2025 was a year of significant milestones for Manzanita Works. Highlights included celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Manzanita Coalition, receiving our 501(c)(3) determination from the IRS, and launching and implementing the many thoughtful iterations of our programs. I'm excited to share these achievements with you in the report.

We are grateful for our fiscal sponsor Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, our dedicated Board of Directors and internal team of volunteers, advisors and independent contractor rockstars from Beloved Business LLC. How fortunate are we to be doing this work in service of our workforce!

None of this would be possible without your support. Your steadfast encouragement, intellectual rigor, personal feedback, financial and in-kind contributions, program collaboration, and leadership while championing our work has been and continues to be a precious gift.



Because of you, the seeds we planted over the years have developed rich root networks. After quietly knowing in our hearts that we were stewarding something new and special, we all have the joy of starting to see what we have planted grow in broad daylight.

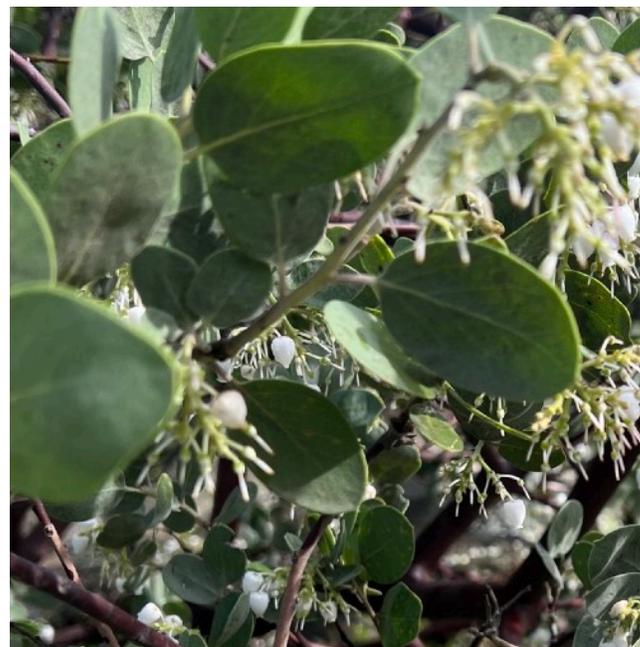
Thank you for being a part of our story.

With appreciation,
Mila Cavala
President and CEO, Manzanita Works

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Organizational Highlights of 2025

- On February 8th, 2025, the **Manzanita Coalition** celebrated its **5th anniversary**. Recalling the organization’s first meeting on the eve of the pandemic in 2020 when 5 community leaders gathered in a classroom at Mountain View High School, in 2025, Coalition members gathered at UAMEZ Church to reaffirm the value of sharing their lived experiences with Manzanita Works.
- At our Annual Board Meeting last Spring, we acknowledged 3 founding Board Directors whose tenures concluded after 2 consecutive terms. Thank you to **Hon. Ian Bain, Maria Marroquín, and Pastor Kaloma Smith;**
- We welcomed 3 new Board Directors this year to serve with **Jason Kim** whose term continues. They are **Josh Paley, Reverend Deborah Lewis-Virges, and William Scott;**
- In August, we were thrilled to receive our letter of **501c3 determination** from the Internal Revenue Service. We are grateful for **Philanthropic Ventures Foundation** who has been our fiscal sponsor since the winter of 2022 and with whom we continue to have a relationship as we transition activities and programs to our independent status.
- In September, our Board held **strategic planning** sessions. With our model and method deployed across 5 programs in our transportation portfolio, we are rolling up our sleeves to adapt our design to our future-of-work (“Futures”) portfolio in 2026.
- In December, we opened our **first bank account!** The financial reporting in our Annual Report reflects our independent financial activities and separate activities in our fiscal sponsor’s audited financials.



Portfolio Overview

Our work is distributed across six portfolio areas, five of which attempt to address structural gaps that interrupt people in their effort to show up fully to work. Pain points in these arenas are felt acutely by the essential workforce: transportation, housing, family care, health and food security. Where one lives, how one commutes, what we define as wellness, how we care for family members, and where we access quality, affordable food can be difficult considerations that if ameliorated, go a long way to supporting our workforce.

Our sixth program area is crafting the “future-of-work”. With those who can suspend cynicism and avoid excessive reliance on history and current trends, we are asking how we want to show up to work in the future. Instead of being constrained by broken systems of today, this portfolio imagines collaborative ways to address the big unknown questions of the near future. We are creating space to explore interdependence in the intimately human-scale and mundane yet beautifully free choices of daily life.

Key Program Highlights of 2025

In 2025, Manzanita Works launched and deepened all five of its **Transportation Portfolio** program designs. Program highlights include:

CALTRAIN PASS FORWARD

- A participating community organization in Caltrain’s Pass Forward program since 2021, we were honored to elevate to the position of Regional Partner. We help connect underserved new riders to this critical transportation commuter rail in San Francisco Bay Area.
- In 2025, 167 passes were loaded and utilized by essential workers we supported; this figure represents 64% of the allocated passes Manzanita Works was awarded. These essential workers include educators from across at least seven school districts as well as those in healthcare, restaurants, retail and more.
- Following recent Caltrain policy changes, we advocated for the continued access of educators and educational support staff to the Pass Forward program. We were pleased to see an exception granted in December to previously enrolled educators for 2026.



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ESSENTIAL WHEELS®

Essential Wheels® provides access to e-bikes and pedal bikes for frontline and returning workers, enabling qualified participants to try a bike for free for up to one year. We are pleased to be working with **Summit Bicycles** as our service provider, and we have many program benefits in place including free roadside assistance with **Better World Club**, e-bike safety e-course access with the **Motorcycle Safety Foundation**, and more.

- In March, thanks to our generous hosts **Kate Kramer** and **Sven Thesen**, Manzanita Works had its first fundraiser to benefit Essential Wheels®. Thank you to all who donated! These donations and funds from our co-sponsor the **City of Redwood City** provided the liquidity to begin our reimbursable public grant.
- In May, we ratified our grant contract with the **San Mateo County Transportation Authority** and Co-Signed with the **City of Redwood City**. As a 3-way contract that includes a nonprofit, our project, the first of its kind for SMCTA to fund, was ranked highest for its equity considerations by SMCTA staff. This program is made possible by local transportation sales tax dollars.
- Thank you, as well, to our sponsor **Sand Hill Properties Co.** and to **Grace Lutheran Church** for their Legacy Fund Grant which enabled the first 2 e-bikes to go out on the road and an additional 2 e-bikes for program participants from geographies outside of Redwood City.
- As of January 2026, there are currently 13 e-bikes borrowed. The commute routes of these participants cross in 7 jurisdictions from San Jose to San Mateo and have prevented **over 20 tons of CO₂ emissions** in 2025.
- Participants are self-reporting an **average monthly savings of \$139.09** which is 52% of their commute costs prior to the program. Most are using these savings toward their basic needs.



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ESSENTIAL EXPRESS®

Essential Express® provides access to long-haul vanpools and shuttles for frontline and returning workers, enabling qualified participants to try this form of commute. Originating as a request by a teacher for us to develop a shared commute program on the eve of the pandemic, this program began as a six week pilot in 2021, and we are pleased to share news of its evolution.



- In July, we were honored to receive the approval of **Redwood City Council** to **co-sponsor** a grant application for funding Essential Express® as a community vanpool program. In addition, this body pledged local matching funds in the event that the application is selected by the County.
- In November, the **Board** of the **San Mateo County Transportation Authority** voted to approve our proposal. Moreover, they voted to upwardly adjust to the maximum allowed!
- This funding will provide for the development and deployment of **one to three long-haul vanpools** from origin points more than a 75-minute drive from Redwood City. Eligible essential workers who are employed in Redwood City will be able to ride for free for up to 12 months through qualified transportation service providers.

ESSENTIAL KICKS™

Essential Kicks™ provides access to free non-slip workplace footwear. In doing our commute outreach back in 2021, we heard that the cost of quality non-slip shoes is unrealistic for many in the service sector. When discussing potential ways to commute, service workers often found the idea of walking to the train or a bus stop to be one too many sore footsteps after a long day. We are pleased to share:

- In collaboration with service providers **Footwear Etc.** and **KEEN** and with the generous support of **individual donors**, we launched this program in December.
- Income-qualified essential workers can sign up to receive vouchers to access a variety of brands and styles at the brick and mortar locations of Footwear Etc. in Los Altos and San Carlos, and the KEEN Garage in downtown Palo Alto. Limit one pair of shoes per person per year.



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PILOTAGE™ (Transportation)

Last but not least, **Pilotage™** is our method for assisting the workers we serve with understanding their options for navigating to work. Sometimes called “commute counseling” or “commute concierge services” in the transportation space, we provide general education to connect commuters to the transportation resources that we are aware of. This hand-holding is largely unfunded, and yet it is a critical component to all of our work and organizational ethos.

Like many at the start of 2025, Manzanita Works watched the tragedy of the Los Angeles fires unfold with deep concerns about the capacity of our communities to address the risks of catastrophic fires. Calling to our minds the shared lived experience of essential workers who had to evacuate their homes in the Santa Cruz Mountains during the 2020 CZU Complex Fire, the events in Los Angeles were a galvanizing moment. We had spent much of 2024 looking at what design sketches might help prevent such risks to life and property and were able to develop our fledgling program design ideas in our **Futures Portfolio** into something tangible. Program highlights include:

ESSENTIAL TOOLS™

- In 2024 we launched what we first called “The Manzanita Toolshare” with a cumbersome program enrollment process. However, this year, we streamlined the program and acquired additional tools for vegetation management through our local vendor network in Redwood City.
- In April, we had our first organic loan in our tool share program after tabling at **San Mateo County’s “Be Wildfire Safe & Ready”** event at the County Fairgrounds. The tool? A sander. The borrower? A resident from the City of San Mateo.
- Similarly, at the 21st Annual **San Mateo County Disaster Prep Day** in August, our table for the tool share brought more visibility and membership to our program. Thank you to the **Office of Emergency Management** for the invitation to participate alongside local Fire Districts, FireSafe communities, CERT groups and more.
- In October, we took a big leap and renamed the program **Essential Tools™** and the program was featured in the *Redwood City Pulse*.
- By the end of 2025, program membership had grown to 59 people who are residents in 17 communities across 2 counties. There are over 220 items in our inventory. Thank you to those who donated non-gas powered items to add to the collection.



MANZANITA WORKS

PILOTAGE™ (Futures)

As described above in our transportation portfolio, **Pilotage™** is our method for assisting the workers we serve on understanding their options with navigation. To this end, 2025 forged several collaborations on the topic of wildfire prevention that go beyond our Essential Tools™ program. We start 2026 excited to build upon our 2025 efforts:

- In March, we engaged with stakeholders across four counties related to achieving home hardening in alignment with State and local regulations and FireWise USA® standards. Included in these efforts were program scoping of our **Essential Time™** community time bank.
- In June, we were selected to be a **California Department of Insurance Community Partner**. Connecting the people we serve to important news and initiatives, we took part in webinars on climate resiliency, innovation in the insurance industry, and case study projects to address “Zone Zero” compliance for wildfire prevention.
- In August, we hosted a **“Safer From Wildfires” Webinar** with the Department of Insurance and other invited guests from CA Board of Forestry and Fire Prevention, Fire Safe San Mateo County, Hillsborough FireWise USA, Hidden Villa, San Mateo County Office of Emergency Management, and more. We had attendees from Pacifica to Carmel who live in or near Wilderness Urban Interface (WUI zones) as well as various local agencies and public officials.
- In October, we formalized our collaboration with the **San Mateo County Office of Emergency Management** as it relates to the promotion of home hardening efforts and the exploration of emergency communication options available to residents.
- And to end the calendar year, we are grateful to have received funding from the community group **Coastside Allies** for strategic program planning to facilitate home hardening in 2026.



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2025 Financial Report

We submitted our public charity application to the Internal Revenue Service in the last few days of 2024 and started 2025 with no standalone activity as Manzanita Works, Inc. Instead, we continued to strengthen our fiscal sponsor relationship with the renowned organization **Philanthropic Ventures Foundation**. We have been fiscally sponsored since our inception and are grateful to the hosts who gave us the time and capacity to mature towards independent operations.

In August of 2025, we were pleased to receive our **501(c)(3) letter of determination** from the Internal Revenue Service, backdated to the date they received our application on December 27, 2024. With this, we embarked on the necessary compliance responsibilities. From a financial operations perspective, we did not receive any monetary contributions until December 2025 when we opened our first bank account with donations from our Board and Officers. We received our first external grant from Coastside Allies on New Year's Eve. With the backdated determination, we were able to recognize various in-kind donations of tools and supplies as well.

<u>Revenue:</u>		<u>Expenses:</u>	
Donors:	\$ 120.00	Operational:	\$ 169.00
Grants:	\$ 1,500.00		
In-Kind:	\$ 1,050.20		

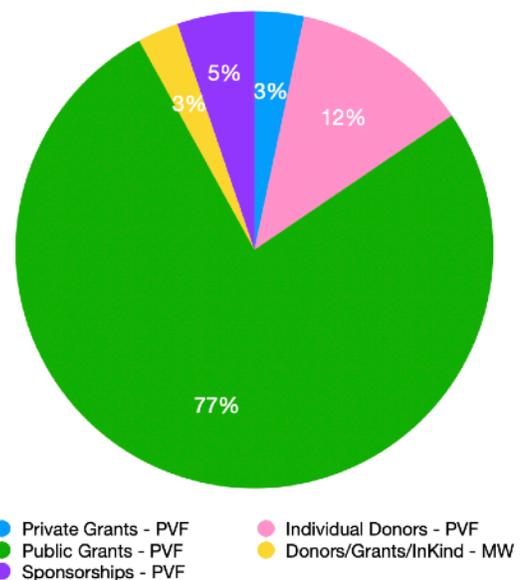
Looking at our financial activity within Philanthropic Ventures Foundation, we share with you:

<u>Revenue:</u>		<u>Expenses:</u>	
Donors:	\$ 11,630	Program:	\$102,942.00
Grants:	\$ 76,466	Operational:	\$1,781.55
Sponsorships:	\$ 5,000		

Combined for an overall picture of our financial activity, the pie chart here shows the distribution of various public and private revenues Philanthropic Ventures Foundation collected on our behalf as well as the funds we collected separately.

Our adopted organizational Budget for 2025 was \$73,000 with anticipated revenues of \$75,000.

Our actual expenditures across our account at PVF and our independent activity came to \$104,892.55. We started 2025 with \$21,065.85 in reserves and raised a total of \$244,300.20. Of this raised is a \$200,000 reimbursable grant. We drew \$48,266 during 2025 and carry the balance into 2026.



Donor Acknowledgement

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve local communities through public and private grants as well as program sponsorships. Here, we would like to especially thank the individuals who made donations to our organizations in 2025 to support our Essential Wheels®, Essential Kicks™ and Essential Tools™ programs as well as unrestricted capacity building gifts. Heartfelt appreciation goes to:

*Nina Luu and Alex Antebi
Jennifer DiBrienza & Jesse Dorogusker
Catherine Crystal Foster and Jon Foster
Anne and Buzz Frahn
Bob Heldt
Enam Hoque & Madhury Khan
Jason Kim*

*Kate Kramer and Sven Thesen
Don McDougall
Lee Taubeneck
Norm Torello
Mila Zelkha
Jin Zhu
Anonymous*

Testimonials

We conclude our Annual Report with some of the feedback provided to Manzanita Works from our program participants this past year. Thanks to these courageous individuals, essential workers, in their willingness to try something new, we have created communities that mutually benefit us all.

“Program has been extremely helpful. I am thankful for the support.”

“I think the program is wonderful. I’ve noticed that getting outside really improves my mental health.”

“It’s been helpful mostly with saving money and socio-emotional well-being. I always feel better after a bike ride.”

“I especially appreciate this program. I feel a sense of belonging.”

“Such an awesome resource!”



With appreciation, the Manzanita Works team.