

Yleana Core Flagship Programs: Overview

Yleana Leadership Foundation (Yleana) is dedicated to closing the racial wealth gap by increasing access to education. With holistic, trauma-informed academic support and mentoring services, Yleana helps BILPOC students from low-income backgrounds get to college, graduate, make smart financial decisions, and start careers – setting them on a path toward a lifetime of financial empowerment.

In 2024, Yleana is focusing on expanding the services developed in the crucible of the Yleana Leadership Academy (YLA) over the last 10 years – bringing the programs that have worked so well to a larger group of students. We want to expand our educational disruption to even more students!

- **This is part of Yleana’s strategic plan to increase partnerships and bring our “special sauce” of teaching/learning—what we’ve seen succeed at camp for 10 years—to an even wider group of students in our communities.**

Impact

- **We have an 83% college graduation rate:**
 - **The graduation rate for low-SES, first-gen college students in the US is 11-12%. We are MULTIPLYING THAT NUMBER BY 8.**
- Yleana students’ average financial aid package is **2.25 times the normal financial aid package!**
 - 1 in 5 students gets a full ride (or close to it!)
- **For each point increased on the SAT, college graduates make \$122 more in annual salary!**

See our impact stats

- Impact stats: <https://bit.ly/yleana-impact-data>
- Yleana’s impact video: <https://bit.ly/Yleana-Impact-Video>

Theory of change

- <https://bit.ly/yleana-theory-of-change>

Who are our students?

- Our population is 95% BILPOC, primarily Black and Latinx
- Average family income of \$32,829
- We are a “non-creaming” org:
 - Our students are in the “thick middle of the academic achievement curve” - struggling but capable with the right support
- 77% of our students are first-generation college students
- 31% of our kids are non-native speakers of English
- We’ve served over 1500 low-income students in 11 years

Where do we do our work?

- We partner with districts, high schools and CBOs in
 - Baltimore
 - Boston/North Shore MA
 - NYC
 - Philadelphia

What is camp like? (Yleana Leadership Academy)

- https://youtu.be/jQNa_XsFh-U

Who are our kids?

- [Our population is 95% BIPOC, primarily Black and Latinx](#)
- [Average family income of \\$32,829](#)
- We partner with high schools and CBOs in [Baltimore](#), [Boston/North Shore MA](#), [NYC](#), and [Philadelphia](#).
- We’ve served over 1000 low-income students in Baltimore, Boston, NYC, and Philadelphia
- 77% of our students are first-generation college students
- 31% of our kids are non-native speakers of English

About the Yleana Leadership Foundation

The Yleana Leadership Foundation sees the US's **racial wealth gap** (economic/wealth accumulation) as a **consequence** of the **opportunity gap** (education). Our mission is to decrease the opportunity gap in order to decrease the racial wealth gap - by making sure students have **access** to the **best resources possible** as they **enter college**, we will **change their economic position and ability to accumulate wealth as adults**.

Our population is **95% BIPOC**, primarily **Black** and **Latinx**, with an average family income of **\$32,829**. We partner with high schools and CBOs in **Baltimore, Boston/North Shore MA, NYC, and Philadelphia**. We are emphatically a non-creaming organization, meaning our actions are directed at slow, incremental change in the thick middle of the curve.

By increasing the selectivity of the colleges our students attend, we:

[1] Increase college graduation rates and access to more supportive programming

[2] Secure better financial aid packages and decrease loans, allowing students to start life with less debt

[3] Increase salaries after graduation - double and triple what students would have made after a less selective college

We also **provide ongoing support** to our students TO and THROUGH college: We ensure they have the support they need to **get into college, persist through college and transition successfully into a career** - with the aid of the following programs:

[1] College Access Mentoring

[2] College Success (Persistence) Mentoring

[3] College-to-Career Transitional Mentoring

[4] Job/internship Database

[5] Safety net: Once you're part of the Yleana family, you're family forever - we're here for you, whatever you need!

Our work moves the normal college graduation rate from 11% (college grad rate for low-SES, first-gen students) to 80% (college grad rate for Yleana students). **Doubling or tripling graduation rates and cutting student loans in half/getting rid of them completely means Yleana has a discrete economic impact on students' financial outcomes. We multiply the college graduation rate by almost 8, meaning that we are multiplying by 8 the number of low-SES, first-gen students who can benefit from the \$1M increase in lifetime earnings that comes with a college degree.**

Through this series of intentional college-related financial decisions and support through college, we are incrementally moving the middle of the economic curve - which has the power to ultimately move the center of the US economic pyramid, for the longest-ranging and broadest impact on the income distribution of the United States.

NYC: Summer Camp

In 2024, camp will be held in a day camp format in partnership with Park East High School, Central Park East High School, and The Young Women's Leadership School (all located in East Harlem, New York City, serving 100% low-income students). The camp will serve NYC students who need to boost SAT scores to gain admission to colleges that will meet up to 100% of their financial need.

In a typical day at camp, students will engage in Yleana's unique SAT prep system, developed specifically for first-gen college students, using Socratic teaching methods, holistic stress management techniques, and a proven effective system for practice testing in small classes of ten or fewer students. Teaching will focus on "hearing the kernel of truth in the student's utterance" and discussing the test through the lens of performance and critical thinking—matching what students already know/know how to do with the challenge before them.

By improving SAT scores, students gain access to schools that offer the most financial aid, greatly reducing the burden of student loan debt and putting them on a strong financial path. The innovative teaching method, along with the additional workshops and activities, helps students begin building the necessary skills to persist in college. Along with their impressive SAT score increases, students report that YLA significantly improves their self-esteem, their belief in themselves, and their willingness to persevere, and makes them feel enthusiastic and optimistic about college life and their future career options.

Post-camp mentoring programs

Yleana mentors are Yleana alumni and partners from corporations and foundations. The majority of mentors are first-generation, low-income, and BILPOC/historically marginalized individuals themselves, and are able to speak directly to students about shared challenges. Students see themselves represented, and receive real-world advice from those who are equipped to give it.

College Access Mentoring

Following camp, students enter the pipeline of Yleana mentoring services that get them to college graduation. Students receive extensive assistance through the College Access Mentoring program, including help choosing colleges to apply to, completing application forms, evaluating the financial utility of each school, and assistance with any and all college application questions. Upon acceptance, mentors

and Yleana staff help families assess potential schools for their financial viability and long-term benefits.

College Persistence Mentoring

As students enroll in and then attend college, Yleana mentors also provide a College Persistence Mentoring program to ensure students can successfully graduate. Yleana students face many obstacles to college persistence, particularly at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). They may have difficulty engaging academically or require remedial classes, face difficulties with a sense of belonging and/or mental health, and may experience financial obstacles (including housing and food insecurity, the need to help provide for their family, and college finances). Yleana's mentoring curriculum provides mentors with the skills and knowledge to evaluate these systemic obstacles and support students with Yleana's resources.

College-to-Career Transitional Mentoring

When students are in their final three semesters of college, our College-to Career Transitional Mentorship Program, launched in Spring 2021 by our Young Professionals' Council, guides our college students and recent college grads through the transition to careers. Mentors, who are leaders in careers similar to those our students strive to enter, help students answer questions like "I have this degree - now what?", "What does my degree equal in terms of a job?", and "How do I apply for this job?" Mentor/mentee pairs can either meet in person or virtually and are encouraged to meet as a pair at least once a month, guided by a comprehensive curriculum including:

- Career ideation
- Building a resume
- Interviewing skills
- Looking for and applying for jobs
- Weighing different job offers
- Negotiating your offer
- Crafting a LinkedIn profile
- Sending cold emails
- Shaping a career story
- Navigating the workplace culture and expectations
- How to succeed/develop relationships in the workplace

Mentor/mentee pairs can meet for a short period of time, focusing on a specific goal (i.e. interview prep or landing an internship), or form a long-term relationship to bridge the transition from college to career, discussing the longer arc of a career trajectory. Since launching two years ago, we have successfully matched over 40 mentor-mentee pairs and have hosted 15+ career readiness workshops.

Career and Financial Education Programs

Yleana Leadership Foundation's career readiness event series is intended to prepare students for the professional world through workshops that focus on a variety of career readiness topics, including perfecting your elevator pitch, preparing your professional materials (resume, cover letter, LinkedIn profile, etc.), networking, and the basics of searching and applying for jobs and internships. Typically, our career readiness events fall into three categories:

- Skills Workshops (interview practice, resume crafting, etc.)
- Career Insight Workshops (exploring different professions - and common issues that arise in these jobs - through the eyes of a professional in the field.)
- Higher Education and Industry Panels (looking into the process for applying to graduate school, exploring pursuing a career in a particular field, etc.)

Jobs/Internships/Opportunities Database

Yleana offers an internal jobs/internships/opportunities database to serve our alums through college and beyond. This database, launched at the beginning of 2022, provides a repository of opportunities - including jobs, internships, fellowships, workshops, and events - for our alums. Whenever possible, these opportunities include a personal Yleana connection/referral so that alums have a point of contact when applying for a specific opportunity.