



Magnolia
Project

We turn small town
potential into economic
opportunity



The Challenge

Middle and high school students in small towns face geographic and economic resource barriers that leave them with two choices: Remain in the communities that shaped them or leave for the “big cities” to find opportunities to build a career, networks, or investment infrastructure that gives their dreams a chance to succeed (Gallup and Walton Family Foundation 2025).

If we want young people from small towns and rural communities to thrive, not just survive, then they need a tailored ecosystem of economic opportunity that expands their reality of what's possible, connects them to the capital needed to pursue their dreams allows them to reject the belief that a life in their hometown means economic and professional sacrifice.



Our Approach

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.

In the 2026-27 school year, Magnolia Project will serve 700 students in 21 public schools through its school based programs, and will award 4 Next Step Scholarships.

“The Magnolia Project Career Catalyst experience was the most part of my high school career. It showed me what I would like to pursue in the future and gave me hands-on experience.” -12th Grade student in Marin County

Our Programs

- **School Based Programs:** 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 (launching in 2029):** Magnolia Project will provide entrepreneurs ages 18-35 in the communities it serves with training, technical assistance, and capital to launch or grow businesses that generate income and create jobs. As their businesses grow, participants can mentor students as part of Magnolia Project's school based programs, or sponsor a Next Step Scholarship.

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 nationwide.



Learn More: Magnolia Project, is excited to expand to new communities and work with new partners.

Visit www.magnolia-project.org or reach out to info@magnolia-project.org to connect with our team and start a conversation.