

Impact Report 2025

Expanding Opportunity Through
Entrepreneurship.



FOUNDER
FORWARD

2025 Impact Report

Investing in Community-Centered Founders.

In 2025, Founder Forward continued its commitment to expanding opportunity for founders. From launching new programming and partnerships to investing in organizational capacity, we continued building an ecosystem where founders have the support they need to thrive.



3

New Initiatives Launched



2

National Capacity-Building Cohorts Joined



9

Strategic Partnerships Established



12

Grant Applications Submitted



30

Volunteers Engaged



200+

People Engaged Across Programs and Events

Launched PitchProv

Following a successful 2024 pilot, we launched PitchProv in response to a need for low-pressure environments for founders to flex their storytelling skills and a growing interest in entrepreneurship across the workforce. PitchProv is where pitching meets improv – an opportunity to think on your feet, sharpen your pitch, and learn alongside new people.

94%

of attendees reported increased commitment to entrepreneurial ecosystems.

97%

of youth attendees reported increased confidence.

97%

of attendees reported increased sense of community.

100%

of attendees would invite a friend to PitchProv.



PitchProv Pilot at Ginjan Café,
Former Founder Forward grant recipient



PitchProv for Youth at Long Island University
In partnership with Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy,
Charter High School and BuildNYC



PitchProv at Diversitech hosted by Tribaja Co.,
Former Founder Forward Grant Recipient

Strengthened Founder Support

Building the Support Founders Deserve

In 2025, we deepened the infrastructure that supports our founders. By building our own advisory network and new programming formats, we enhanced our ability to be responsive to founder needs with workshops, feedback sessions, and founder events.

Impact Day



To celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we teamed up with Prudential to host an Impact Day. Volunteers with expertise from marketing to operations provided guidance to **four founders**, offering practical feedback on their decks and storytelling before participating in a friendly pitch competition. Each founder received **\$1,250 in unrestricted funding**, and the winner, Dani Lopez of Hello Lulo, earned an **additional \$1,000**.

Launched Volunteer Advisory Network

To strengthen our internal support structure for founders, we launched a volunteer advisory network with six trusted advisors. The Network was created to address critical gaps in knowledge and technical support for founders in non-dominant startup markets.



**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH
LIVE PANEL DISCUSSION**

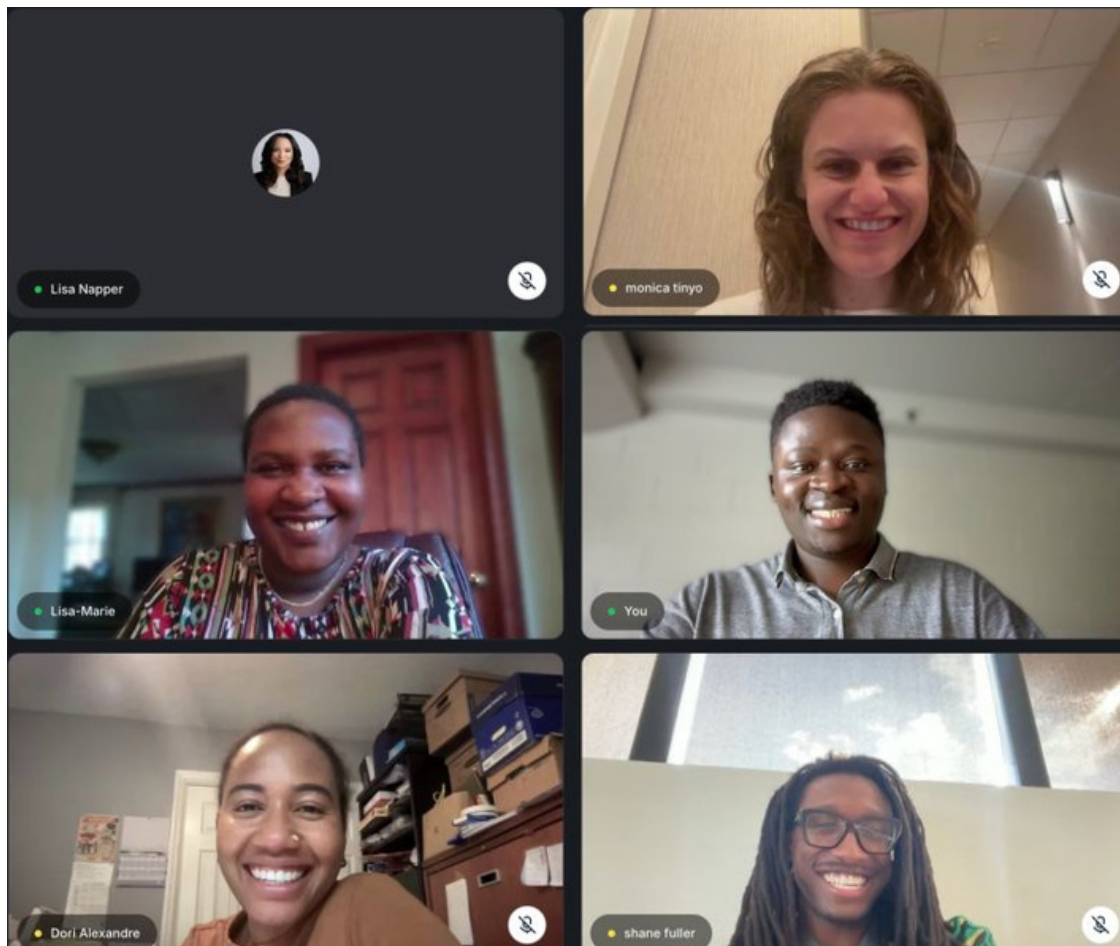
 Marcellis Counts Founder Apiary in the Sky	 Chris Taylor Founder Forward Advisory Board Chief Growth Officer, Left Lane Capital	 Stacey Garwe Moderator Founder Forward Communications & Insights Intern	 Dean K. Moore, Esq. Founder Forward Network Advisor Founder / Principal, Esquire Atelier	 Jie Feng Founder Kells
---	---	--	--	---

 **TUESDAY, 22
APRIL, 2025**  **2PM - 3PM EDT**  **LINKEDIN
LIVE**

 **FOUNDER
FORWARD**

To announce the launch of the Volunteer Advisory Network we hosted a LinkedIn Live panel discussion. This session highlighted the role volunteers play in a community-centered ecosystem and why we launched the network.

Founder Feedback Session



We hosted a Founder Feedback session with former Founder Forward grantee Shane Fuller. This session put him in the “hot seat” to receive candid feedback from volunteer experts. Through thoughtful questions and sharp insights, the team of advisors explored strategies, stress-tested assumptions, and surfaced ideas to help move Shane’s venture forward.

Cybersecurity Workshop

We partnered with New Harbor to host a free workshop designed for founders interested in the basic tools needed to secure their business. Founders learned security protocol and data protection fundamentals to build customer trust and increase investor confidence.

Thought Leadership

Ideas That Move Ecosystems Forward

Transforming the entrepreneurial ecosystem requires shaping the conversation. In 2025, we elevated our leadership through workshops, panels, and storytelling. We expanded our reach, doubling our LinkedIn following through 59 posts and 8 blog posts highlighting our work and vision.



Dr. Lisa-Marie Pierre led a workshop at the Nonprofit Marketing Summit organized by Community Boost. She shared what Founder Forward has learned about taking a place-based approach to impact.

We partnered with Ugly Talk to host a founder panel on making early strategic hires and sharing their journey to scaling to \$500k. Moderated by Dr. Lisa-Marie, it was an opportunity for former Founder Forward grant recipients to share their journey scaling their businesses and becoming job creators.



We partnered with Build NYC to host a workshop for young leaders interested in entrepreneurship. Through a panel discussion, interactive lessons, and honest reflection, they developed the skills and insights needed to start a business.

Invested in Organizational Capacity

Building for What's Next

In a challenging fundraising environment, Founder Forward remained focused on building momentum for the future. Through new partnerships, creative fundraising efforts, and participation in national capacity-building programs, we continued strengthening the foundation needed for long-term impact.



Applied for 12 grants worth \$1.1 million in funding.



Accepted into 2 National Capacity-Building Cohorts

- Mockingbird Incubator
- PwC x Taproot Scope-A-Thon



Established 9 New Partnerships

We expanded strategic partnerships to support grant applications, events, and community engagement.

Developed 2 New Programming Frameworks: AI Civic Studio and Across Space and Time



AI Civic Studio: Equipping communities with the knowledge and skills to lead responsible AI adoption and implementation.



Across Space and Time: A media series capturing topophilia - the love of place - through founders whose love for their cities shapes the businesses they build.

Launched 1 End-of-Year Campaign



We executed a campaign that combined a direct mail appeal to high-net-worth-individuals and limited edition merch. The merch highlighted our 2025 mantra, Keep Moving Forward.

Hosted 1 Fundraising Night at the New York Liberty Game



We hosted a fundraising night at a New York Liberty Women's Basketball Game. The event introduced new supporters to Founder Forward while raising funds.



FOUNDER
FORWARD

connect@founderforward.org
<https://founderforward.org/>
Headquarters: 134 East 40th St.
New York, NY 10016

Copyright (c) 2026 by Founder Forward
All Rights Reserved