

YOUTH CINEMA PROJECT

2025–2026 Program Impact Report

Unlocking the Power of Learning Through Filmmaking

LFI LATINO FILM INSTITUTE

Executive Summary

During the 2025–2026 school year, the Youth Cinema Project (YCP) continued to empower young storytellers through hands-on filmmaking experiences that foster creativity, collaboration, confidence, and essential 21st-century skills. Serving nearly 2,000 students across 23 school district partnerships, YCP connected students with professional filmmaking mentors and classroom teachers to bring storytelling to life. Students strengthened their social-emotional and academic skills while gaining real-world experience in storytelling and filmmaking.

Key Results

93% of surveyed students would recommend YCP to a friend

82% of surveyed students expressed interest in filmmaking as a career

98% of teachers observed an increase in student confidence

48% of teachers observed an attendance increase

Aligned to CASEL Competencies

YCP's rubric was built against CASEL's framework, 21st-century learning skills, and industry standards. The table below shows how each CASEL competency maps to the rubric and what percent of surveyed students reported strong or higher improvement. Where two figures appear, they match the two skills listed, in order.

CASEL COMPETENCY	YCP RUBRIC DOMAIN(S)	% STUDENTS: STRONG+ IMPROVEMENT
Self-Awareness	My Voice / Reflective Learning	81% / 63%
Self-Management	Managing Emotions / Growth Mindset	66% / 69%
Social Awareness	Supporting Others	70%
Relationship Skills	Collaboration / Speaking & Listening	75% / 68%
Responsible Decision-Making	Creativity & Problem Solving	64%

Listen to what superintendents & principals have to say about YCP.



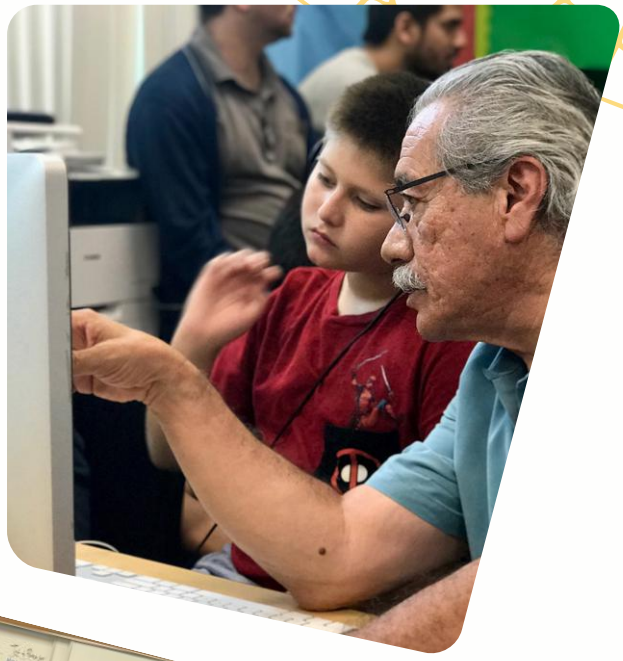
Our Data Goals: Deepening our Story

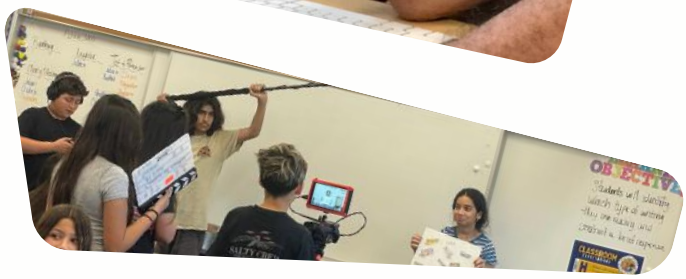
YCP is committed to understanding the full impact of our programs, and we invite our district partners to work with us on deeper data, including:

- Equity of access and impact: Understanding who YCP serves by race/ethnicity, English Learner status, special education status and family income.
- Connection to district outcomes: Linking participation to attendance, GPA, discipline, and A-G completion.
- Statistical confidence: Growing survey participation beyond this year's 997 respondents, out of nearly 2,000 students served.

About YCP

Founded in 2013 by Edward James Olmos, the Youth Cinema Project (YCP) transforms classrooms into creative studios and uses storytelling through filmmaking to support student achievement. Through a rigorous standards-based, industry-aligned curriculum, YCP integrates filmmaking with 21st-century learning and social & emotional development to empower youth to tell their stories, build real-world skills, and prepare them for success in school and beyond.





YCP's initiatives include:

- YCP Signature
- YCP CTE Film Production Pathway
- YCP CTE Digital Animation Pathway
- YCP AfterSchool
- YCP Summer
- YCP Alumni Pathways
- YCP Fellowship
- YCP@LALIFF
- and a model designed for alternative education settings

Guided by their filmmaking mentors, students collaborate with their production team to produce their film projects that premiere at the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF) at the end of the school year - a real-world experience on a national platform!

> *I'm proud that I never gave up. I had grit!*
> **-5th grade YCP Filmmaker**



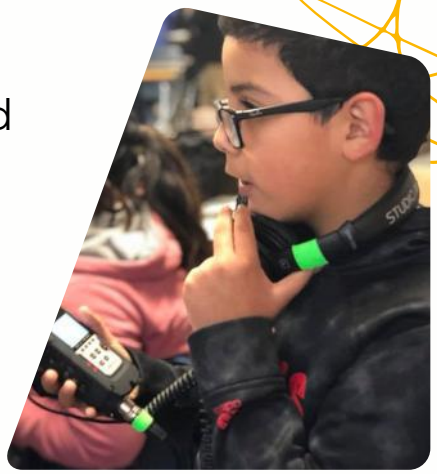
Our Commitment to Student Safety

Before entering any classroom, every YCP filmmaking mentor completes a three-step interview process, a background check and DOJ LiveScan fingerprinting, a TB test, and sexual harassment prevention and mandated reporter training. These requirements align with school district standards and are a baseline condition of employment with the Latino Film Institute's Youth Cinema Project.

Our Reach in 2025-26

Nearly 2,000 students. 23 districts. 57 schools. 65 classes.

In partnership with **67 credentialed teachers** and **82 professional filmmaking mentors**, YCP delivered **5,416 mentorship hours** to students in **Title I schools** and beyond.



Students produced:

- **103** PSAs, mini-docs, web series, and silent films
- **132** short films, and
- **6** advanced short films,

each one written, shot, and edited by young people telling their own stories.

Partner School Districts & Schools

Northern California Region

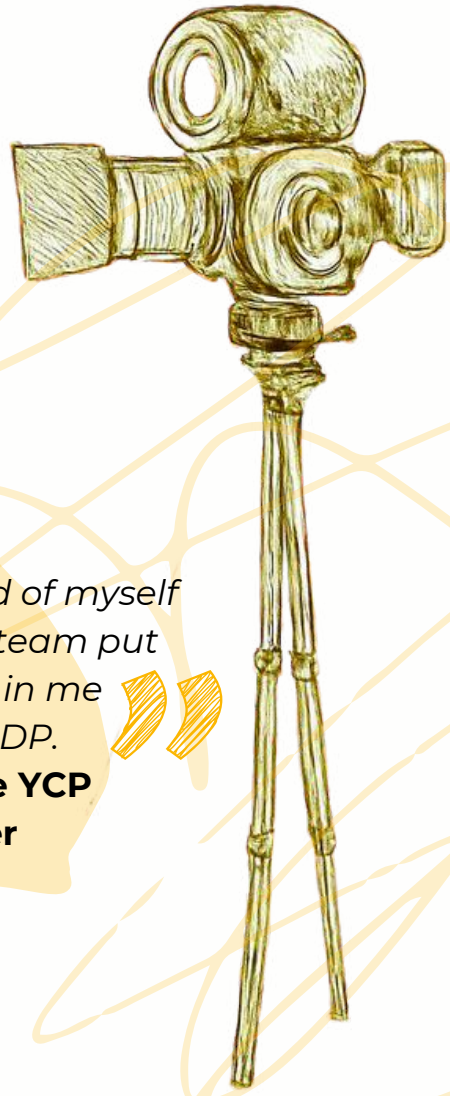
1. Cabrillo Unified School District
2. Jefferson Elementary School District
3. Morgan Hill Unified School District
4. Napa Valley Unified School District
5. New Haven Unified School District
6. North Monterey County Unified School District
7. Pajaro Valley Unified School District
8. Stockton Unified School District

Central California Region

1. Bakersfield City School District

Southern California Region

1. Brawley Elementary School District
2. El Monte City School District
3. El Rancho Unified School District
4. Garden Grove Unified School District
5. Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District
6. Learn4Life
7. Los Angeles Unified School District
8. Montebello Unified School District
9. Oxnard School District
10. Palmdale Academy Charter School
11. Palmdale School District
12. Paramount Unified School District
13. Pasadena Unified School District
14. Santa Paula Unified School District



> *I felt proud of myself when my team put their trust in me being the DP.*
> **-12th grade YCP Filmmaker**

Our Impact

Survey voices behind these results:

- *997 students*
- *46 teachers*
- *82 mentors*
- *23 district partners*

Social & Emotional Learning

81%
of surveyed students reported improvement in **using their voice — up from 78% last year.**

70%
of surveyed students reported improvement in **supporting others.**



98%
of teachers observed **increased student confidence and 89% saw stronger engagement in class.**

75%
of surveyed students reported improvement in **collaborating with others and 80% of teachers rated students' ability to collaborate effectively as strong.**

Academic Impact & 21st-Century Learning

65%
of surveyed students reported growth in **reading and writing, and 68% in speaking and listening.**

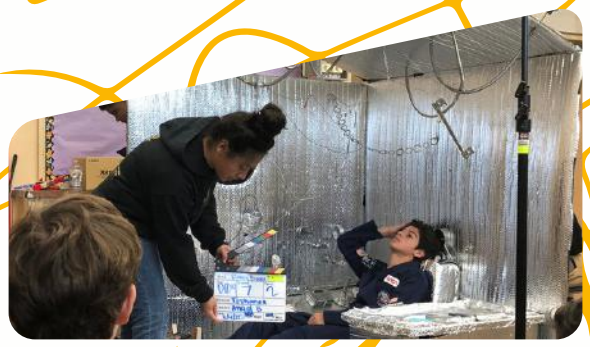
85%
of teachers rated students' **ownership of their work as strong.**



80%
of surveyed students reported growth in their **comfort with film technology and equipment — up from 76% last year.**

71%
of mentors reported students **mastered pitching and public speaking, with editing mastery up from 25.5% to 38%.**

59% of teachers reported **improvements in students' reading and writing skills — up from 51% last year.**





Program Engagement & School Connection

53%
of surveyed students say **YCP gives them something to look forward to, and 40% feel more excited to come to school.**

93%
of surveyed students would **recommend YCP to a friend — up from 90% last year.**

82%
of surveyed **students are interested in a film career — 95% of AfterSchool and 79% of Signature students.**

48%
of teachers saw **student attendance increase — up from 41% last year.**







A moment in YCP I felt proud of my work is when we finished our first episode of a 3-part series...to see how we all worked together to finish it.
-10th grade YCP Filmmaker

A moment I felt proud is during production when I was able to lead my team and have two groups organized...we were able to complete what we had to.
-12th grade YCP Filmmaker



My student has grown tremendously in confidence as a student, leader, and writer this year.
-Middle School YCP Partner Teacher

YCP Programs

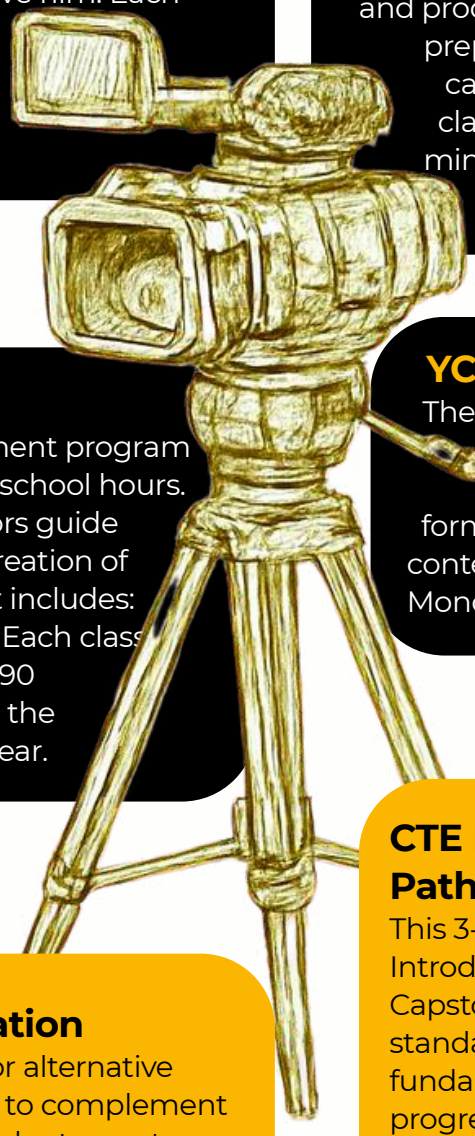
Students are mentored by two professional filmmakers who implement our rigorous filmmaking curriculum in 5th-12th grade classrooms. Students write, pitch, develop, produce, cast, shoot, edit, and screen projects at LALIFF.

YCP Signature

The signature push-in program takes place during school hours. The program utilizes curriculum aligned with English Language Arts and Media Arts state standards. YCP Filmmaking Mentors guide students through creating a short narrative film. Each class meets twice a week for 90 minutes for the duration of the school year.

CTE Film Production Pathway

The CTE Film Production Pathway is a 2-course sequence that includes a Concentrator and Capstone, aligned to CTE AME standards. Students gain hands-on experience in filmmaking, develop technical and creative skills, and produce portfolio-ready work that prepares them for college and careers in the film industry. Each class meets twice a week for 90 minutes for the duration of the school year.



YCP AfterSchool

The afterschool enrichment program takes place during afterschool hours. YCP Filmmaking Mentors guide students through the creation of short-form content that includes: PSAs and a Web Series. Each class meets twice a week for 90 minutes after school for the duration of the school year.

YCP Summer

The summer camp enrichment program guides students through the creation of short-form content comedic skits and digital content. The summer camp meets Monday-Friday for 4 hours for 20 days.

New!

CTE Digital Animation Pathway

This 3-course pathway includes Introductory, Concentrator, and Capstone courses, aligned with CTE AME standards. Students develop fundamental skills and knowledge progressing towards portfolio-ready projects that prepare them for college and careers in animation. Each class meets three times a week for 60 minutes for the duration of the school year.

New!

Alternative Education

Designed specifically for alternative education settings and to complement existing curriculum, students create short-form narrative content meeting twice a week for 90 minutes for 16 weeks.



YCP@LALIFF

A festival within the film festival

The **Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF)** is an international event dedicated to excellence in film, television, music, education and advancement. LALIFF offers a vibrant stage to celebrate the richness and diversity of Latino cinema through distinct directorial voices and culturally significant narratives. In late 2024, the Academy designated LALIFF an Oscar-qualifying festival for its live-action and animated short awards.

A Real-World, Immersive Experience for YCP Filmmakers

Every year, the Youth Cinema Project students premiere their films at LALIFF, walk the red carpet, participate in Q&As, and workshops led by industry professionals.









241 student films premiered at YCP@LALIFF 2026



A moment I felt proud of myself was when I participated in the Q&A panel during the film festival to represent my film.
-12th grade YCP Filmmaker

YCP Alumni Pathways

From Classroom to Industry

YCP continues to connect students from underrepresented communities with opportunities in the entertainment industry through mentorship, networking, and work-based learning experiences.
We meet high school students where they are and guide them through the industry, college, and workforce pathways.

Leaning into our robust ecosystem, this advanced program provides continuity and opportunity *at no cost to YCP alumni.*

Workforce Pathway

Connect alumni with and prepare them for real-world, union-aligned job training that leads to long-term careers. This includes workplace readiness and earn-to-learn opportunities.

College Pathway

Prepare alumni for college entry and success. This includes support with their applications, early college and post-secondary opportunities.

Industry Pathway

Expand alumni's professional awareness and deepen technical knowledge, skills, and competencies. This includes advanced skills training and engagement opportunities.









350+
YCP Alumni in our network

16+
Gigs/Internships

65+
Scholarships

25+
College students

YCP Fellowship

15 scholarships. 15 YCP Alumni. Mentorship. Funding. Network.



The 8-month YCP Fellowship provides a team of young filmmakers with one-on-one mentorship and funding to create an advanced short film. The fellowship engages 15 high school students - YCP Alumni - and provides college-bound students with a high-quality sample that will strengthen their applications and increase their chances of obtaining scholarships.





YCP has allowed me to find a passion I truly love and have shown me that I really can do it.
-YCP Fellow





I enjoyed my time in YCP very much and the support and encouragement my mentors gave.
-9th grade YCP Filmmaker

Alumni Highlights



Emily

- Started YCP in 8th grade, in 2021
- Completed Ghetto Film School program
- Currently a college freshman
- Attended CSSSA obtaining a Distinguished California Arts Scholar designation
- Awarded a $40K Herb Alpert Scholarship for Emerging Young Artists to pursue higher education
- Inaugural YCP Fellow as Gaffer



Jocelyn

- Started YCP in 9th grade, in 2019
- Currently a senior at CSU Fullerton, majoring in Film Production and Entertainment Business
- First-generation college student, proudly showcases her indigenous culture in her filmmaking style
- Completed multiple film programs and opportunities through YCP Alumni, including Film2Future Animation
- Attended CSSSA obtaining a Distinguished California Arts Scholar designation
- Hired for live event production at YCP@LALIFF



Daniela

- Arrived in California from Guatemala in 2019
- Started YCP in 9th grade, in 2019
- Currently a senior at CSUN majoring in Film Production
- Completed multiple film programs and opportunities through YCP Alumni, including Film2Future Animation
- Attended CSSSA obtaining a Distinguished California Arts Scholar designation
- Inaugural YCP Fellow as Cinematographer



Isaac

- Started YCP in 11th grade, in 2023
- Currently attending Pasadena City College, majoring in Film, TV, and Media.
- YCP Fellow as Cinematographer in 2024
- Served as an LFI Industry Programs Intern
- Featured on ABC 7 during Hispanic Heritage Month as a rising young storyteller
- Hired for live event production at LALIFF
- Production Assistant on 2 documentary films on Hulu/FX



Adrien

- Started YCP in 11th grade, in 2024
- Currently a senior at 32nd Street USC Magnet
- YCP Fellow as 1st Assistant Director in 2026
- Inaugural Bloomberg Arts Internship 2026 Summer Intern

Emerging Filmmakers



Alexander

- Started YCP in 8th grade, in 2021
- Currently a freshman at Long Beach City College, majoring in film
- Completed multiple film programs and opportunities through YCP Alumni Pathways
- Selected for the 2023 Herb Alpert Scholarship for Emerging Young Artists - $4K
- Inaugural YCP Fellow as 1st Assistant Camera



Mia

- Started YCP in 12th grade, in 2023
- Completed the Ghetto Film School program and selected for the 2026 International thesis production shoot in Art Dept.
- Has participated in multiple film programs and opportunities through YCP Alumni Pathways
- Recipient of the Rescue Agency mentorship program
- Worked on WBD 100th "Rebel Without A Cause" remake.
- Worked on LFI Inclusion Fellowship film "Trending"
- Inaugural YCP Fellow as Art Director



Lilian

- Started YCP in 8th grade, in 2019
- Currently a sophomore at CSUN majoring in Cinema & Television Arts/Screenwriting
- Completed multiple film programs and opportunities through YCP Alumni Pathways, including Film2Future, New Filmmakers LA
- Served on the 2025 Academy Teen Council
- Attended CSSSA obtaining a Distinguished California Arts Scholar designation
- Southeast LA Youth Film Festival 2nd Place Winner
- YCP Fellow as Producer in 2026



Alexis

- Started YCP in 10th grade, in 2024
- Currently a freshman at Mt. SAC, majoring in film
- Served on the 2026 Academy Teen Council
- YCP Fellow as Sound Mixer in 2025



Kimberly

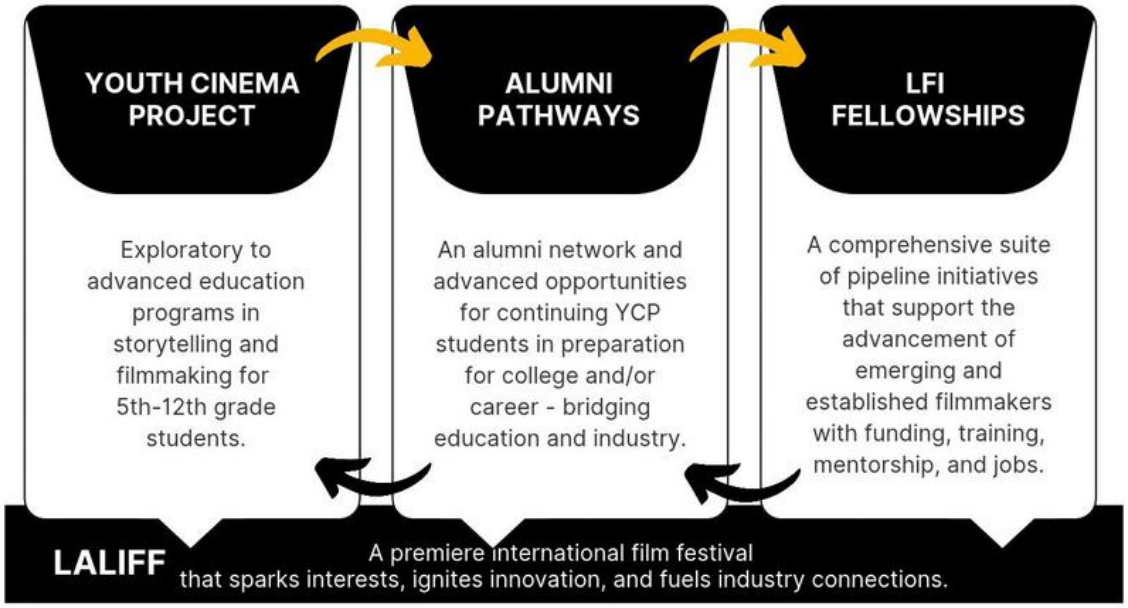
- Started YCP in 7th grade, in 2018
- Currently a junior at UC Riverside majoring in Business - interested in the business side of entertainment.
- Recipient of the Will Packer Productions mentorship
- Featured on Good Morning America as a recipient of Five Below Scholarship $10K for higher education
- Inaugural YCP Fellow as Writer/Director

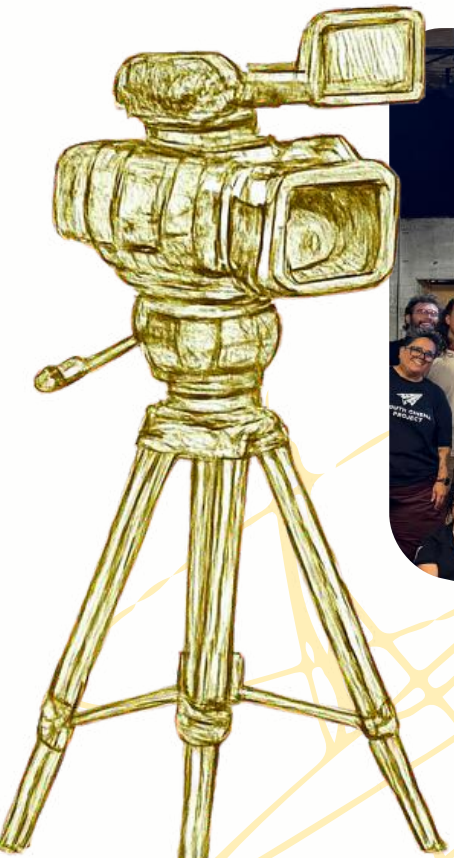
LFI Infrastructure

YOUTH CINEMA PROJECT LALIFF LFI FELLOWSHIPS

An ambitious mission, on purpose.

The Latino Film Institute's (LFI) mission is to transform the entertainment, tech, arts, and media industries by empowering storytellers and creators. We build infrastructure for education, innovation, and advancement, providing signature programs such as the Youth Cinema Project (YCP), the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF), and LFI Fellowships to foster Latino talent and voices.







Funding YCP

Most YCP partners use state and local funds already in their budgets. Here is where YCP fits, what each fund pays for, and the outcomes we can track together.

Funding streams YCP qualifies for

FUNDING STREAM	WHAT IT PAYS FOR	YCP PROGRAMS	OUTCOMES WE CAN TRACK TOGETHER
Prop 28 (Arts and Music in Schools)	Arts and music instruction during the school day	Signature, AfterSchool	Instruction hours, student films, ELA growth
Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOP)	Expanded learning after school, in summer and on intersession days	AfterSchool, Summer	Program days and hours, attendance
LCFF Supplemental and Concentration	Services for English learners, low-income and foster youth	Signature, AfterSchool, CTE	Subgroup outcomes
Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant	Extended learning, academic and social-emotional supports	Signature	SEL and ELA growth, attendance
Arts and music block grants	Arts and music instruction and materials	Signature	Instruction hours, student films
CTE Incentive Grant (CTEIG)	Career technical education pathways	CTE, Signature	Pathway completion, portfolio work
K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP)	CTE pathways aligned to regional workforce needs	CTE	Pathway completion, industry exposure
Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)	Strategies in a school's improvement plan	Signature	Attendance, engagement, SEL growth
Community Schools (CCSPP)	Student supports, expanded learning and family engagement	Signature, AfterSchool	Attendance, engagement, SEL growth
Local parcel tax	Local priorities set by the measure	Signature	What the measure requires

ROI: one year, a lifetime of return

One Year of YCP

$1.2K–$2.5K*

per student, by program

For a class of about 30. Each quote is built around a district's sites and funding.

A Lifelong Network

350+

YCP alumni, and growing

Students who complete a full year stay connected to the YCP network long after the class ends, at no cost to alumni.

Alumni Opportunities

65+

scholarships

Plus 25+ alumni in college, 16+ gigs and internships, and the 8-month YCP Fellowship.

Every class includes:

- Two working filmmaking mentors co-teaching with your credentialed teacher, hired, fully cleared and managed by LFI
- A full school year of instruction aligned to California ELA and Media Arts standards, and CTE AME standards for pathways
- A finished student film/project premiered at LALIFF, an Academy Award®-qualifying festival, with a red carpet, Q&As and industry-led workshops
- Student, teacher and mentor survey results for your district, aligned to CASEL and 21st-Century Learning
- A lifelong place in the YCP Alumni network, with college, workforce and industry pathways, for every student who completes the full school year
- Access to LFI's industry network, including internships, gigs and the YCP Fellowship
- A dedicated YCP administrative team to build, guide and support schools every step of the way

**Per-student range reflects typical YCP classes of about 30 students and varies by program, number of classes and contract term. Funding streams include those YCP partner districts have used and others YCP aligns with; eligibility depends on each district's allocations and plans. Outcome data beyond YCP's own surveys is collected only to the extent each district allows, under a data privacy agreement, with student data safeguarded. Contact us for a quote built for your district.*

Save the Date









Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF)

Wednesday, June 2 - Sunday, June 6, 2027
Los Angeles, CA

Education Symposium

Friday, June 4, 2027
at LALIFF | Los Angeles, CA

Contact Us

Bring YCP to your district!



Christine Salazar
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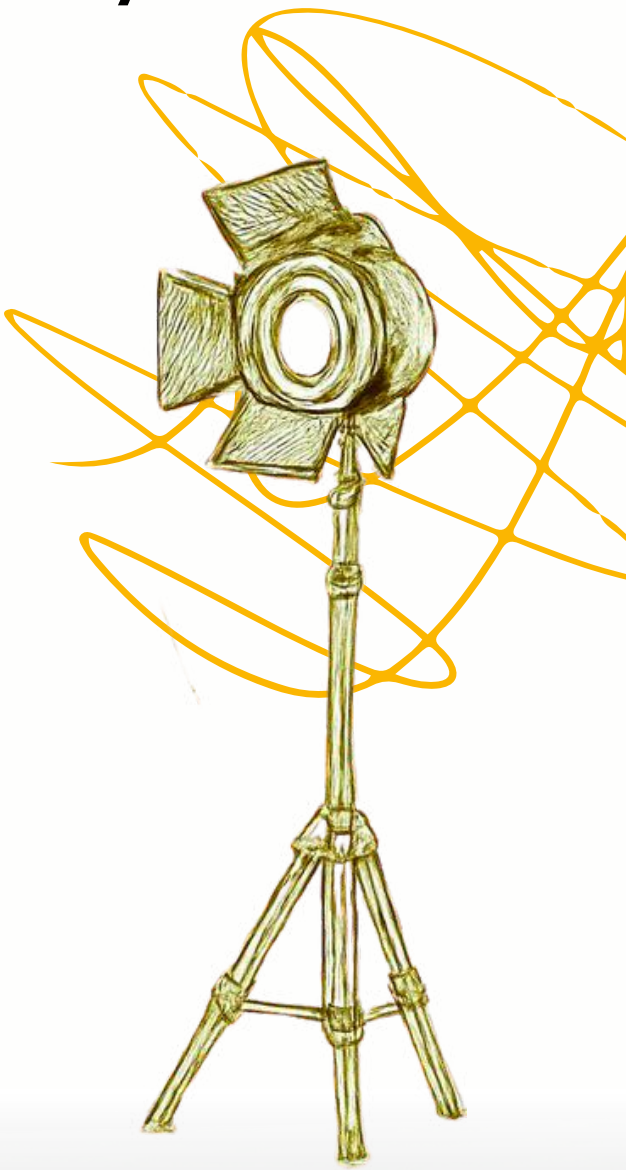
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Thank you for another impactful year!
From your YCP Admin Team
(and YCP alumni and volunteers).





YOUTH CINEMA PROJECT

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www:// youthcinemaproject.org

See YCP films here.