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SEED·SPOT

# ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

*2025 Impact Report*

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# 66

We're thrilled to share our 2025 Impact Report, Rooted in Resilience, highlighting the flexibility, strength, and dedication of SEED SPOT's community of entrepreneurs. Our organization is dedicated to supporting the growth of underrepresented entrepreneurs working to solve pressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

It's no secret that this year was one of the most challenging for America's impact-driven entrepreneurs in recent history. And yet, our organization and our community of founders has remained strong. SEED SPOT's founders have continued growing, raised funds, and made tangible differences in their communities. Since 2012, SEED SPOT has served over 4,616 entrepreneurs who have gone on to generate \$447 million in revenue, raise \$229 million in capital, and create 11,000 jobs.

In the coming year, we're pleased to welcome our new CEO, Shannon McGhee, who will continue SEED SPOT's mission of supporting underrepresented, impact-driven entrepreneurs. We leave you with her words on our organization.

**Warmly,**

**Tristan Gandolfi, Vice President of Programs,  
Lauren McDanell, Vice President of Strategy & Growth,  
& Sentari Minor, Board Chair**

"Invention and ownership are two of the most powerful drivers of economic resilience and shared prosperity. I'm honored to lead this incredible team into SEED SPOT's next chapter to unlock even greater impact for founders across the country."

**- Shannon McGhee, Incoming CEO**





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# OUR APPROACH TO IMPACT

# STEP 1: CONVENE RESOURCES

Social change begins with **seeds: valuable resources that, given the right conditions, can grow into something impactful.** For us, these include:



**Expert Mentors:** A tailored network of mentors, investors and resources



**Skill-Based Curricula:** Curricula centered around entrepreneurs taking strategic action



**Cohort Model:** A cohort model tailored for specific business stages and backgrounds

Demystify the process of business creation



Create diverse networks of mentor and peer support



Facilitate access to knowledge and resources



## STEP 2: ACCELERATE WITH PROGRAMS

SEED SPOT programs nurture the seeds of social and economic change, creating conditions that accelerate the success of impact-driven entrepreneurs. Our programs:

# STEP 3: NURTURE GROWTH

Through these programs, our ventures grow and flourish. This impact unfolds on scales both big and small. The success of our programs creates:



Individual-level  
economic prosperity



Community-level economic  
prosperity



Social and societal impact

14 Years of Annual Surveys of Our Alumni



Original, Data-Based Research on Entrepreneurship Best Practices



Proprietary Entrepreneur Growth Gauge



## STEP 4: MEASURE IMPACT

After each program ends, we use both quantitative and qualitative data to measure our impact and improve our curriculum. These evaluative techniques include:

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# IMPACT OUTCOMES

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

**\$447**  
MILLION

REVENUE GENERATED

CAPITAL RAISED

**\$229**  
MILLION

**11K**

JOBS CREATED

“SEED SPOT’s program got me to where I am now. I’m pitching. I’m confident. And I won a \$25,000\* grant from Adobe.”  
– Isiuwa Igodan, Founder of Bestie Banter

Note: Our data on entrepreneurs and their ventures is based on self-reported information provided directly by the entrepreneurs during our Annual Alumni Impact Survey and other programmatic surveys.

\* Correction (February 2026): An earlier version of this report incorrectly stated that the entrepreneur received \$50,000 from Amazon. The correct award amount is \$25,000. The error has been updated.



# ENTREPRENEUR IMPACT





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# STORIES OF GROWTH & IMPACT



# femPAQ

## Founded by April Roy

On a trip with a friend, April Roy visited a pharmacy and noticed a complete lack of emergency period products. She knew this was part of a bigger problem: in the retail industry, people who menstruate are underrepresented among decision-makers. With femPAQ, she set out to change this.

April's first product—an all-in-one, single-use period care kit—was an immediate best seller. Retailer demand quickly exceeded April's ability to produce her product. That's why she joined SEED SPOT's Retail Brand Accelerator: to solidify her supply chain to meet the needs of the community.

How is femPAQ doing now?  
*In 2025, April signed a deal with Walmart to supply thousands of period care kits to stores across the United States.*

**"SEED SPOT was very intentional and founder-focused. My classmates and mentors were all CPG founders like me. To have that network at my fingertips was invaluable."**

**"This is big. Not only are we going to be in a large retailer like Walmart. We're going to be one of the only period kits on their shelves... SEED SPOT made sure we were ready for this step."**



# Life Startup Essentials

*Founded by Courtney Newell*

*"Before SEED SPOT, we had only grown by word-of-mouth. The facilitators at the Launch Camp put a lot of effort into helping us fine tune our processes and procedures to make sure we could grow intentionally."*

Through sessions with expert facilitators and guidance from SEED SPOT mentors, the our **Launch Camp helped Courtney develop a strategy to grow her business**, including hiring and onboarding the right team for sustainable growth.

Courtney Newell founded Life Startup Essentials in 2015 to assist people experiencing homelessness in the transition to long-term housing. Over 10 years, Courtney has provided kits of essential goods, like cleaning products and healthy food, to over 100,000 individuals.

But Courtney knew her company could do more. She came to SEED SPOT to scale operations and provide assistance to more individuals.



# WellMiss

**Founded by Jennifer "Jaki" Johnson**

After losing her son in 2019, Jennifer "Jaki" Johnson encountered a lack of accessible, full-service care centers for trauma. Though some treated the body and others the mind, few cared for patients holistically. She started her venture, WellMiss, to amend this issue.

***"After the loss, I had to pull together my own care team. I started WellMiss so other women could have care providers that focused on all aspects of their trauma in one place."***

Jennifer came to SEED SPOT with a solid business foundation, but wanted to develop strong partnerships that would help her grow the impact of her venture.

***"SEED SPOT helped us develop the structural, scalable partnerships that we needed to increase our impact."***

Today, Jennifer runs a full-scale online clinic serving hundreds of customers each day. In 2025, WellMiss became the first trauma clinic to ever be recognized as a Certified B Corporation.



Imelda Happy Tamales started as a one-woman operation outside a Phoenix laundromat. When Imelda came to SEED SPOT, she had big goals for growth and impact. She dreamed of a Phoenix storefront that would use its revenue to support the survivors of domestic violence.

SEED SPOT helped Imelda solidify her business plan and establish the connections she needed to grow. Within a year, Imelda was bringing in enough revenue to hire several employees, all of whom were survivors of domestic violence.



# Imelda Happy Tamales

*Founded by Imelda Hartley*

***"We employ survivors of difficult domestic circumstances. Women sometimes experience these situations because they lack the financial stability to break the cycle."***

Since graduating from SEED SPOT, Imelda Happy Tamales has experienced immense growth. In 2024, Imelda was honored as a Taste of the SuperBowl recipient and received the Presidential Service Award for her work to support survivors.

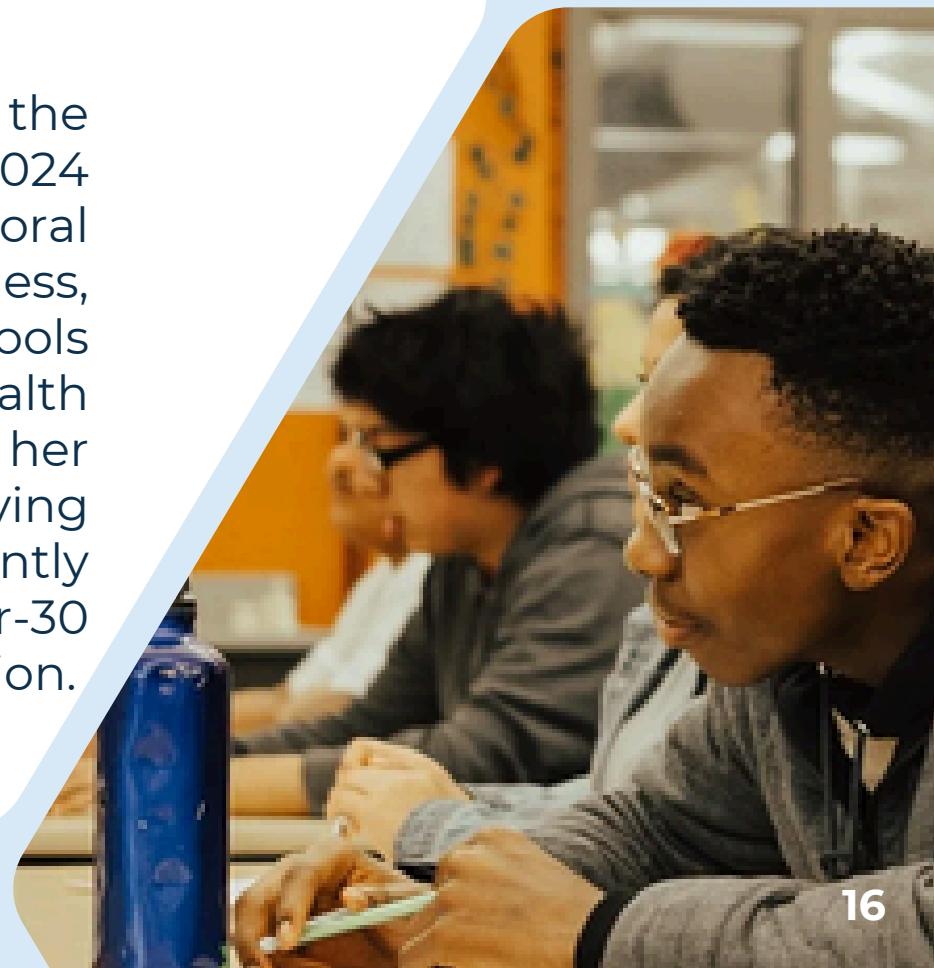
In 2025, SEED SPOT introduced a new role to its programs: Mentors-in-Residence. Hand-selected by our team, these industry experts provide 1:1 mentorship to all participants and assist in live educational workshops.



**Tessa Zimmerman** served as the Mentor-in-Residence for the 2024 cohort of our Mental and Behavioral Health Accelerator. Her business, **Upstream Education**, creates tools that support student mental health and emotional wellbeing. For her innovative approach to improving youth mental health, she recently received a Forbes 30-Under-30 recognition.

# Mentor Spotlight

**Tessa Zimmerman**  
*Founder of Upstream Education*





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# OUR PROGRAMS

# OUR PROGRAMS

Informed by over 13 years of experience and learning, our programs assist the entire spectrum of early-stage entrepreneurs: from those just starting a business to established founders planning for growth.

## DEEPENING IMPACT

## EXPANDING ACCESS

## SUPPORTING ALUMNI

### **Impact Accelerators:**

Intensive, eight-week programs for early-stage entrepreneurs committed to leveling up their business.

### **Launch Camps & Startup Spring Training:**

Multi-day programs for individuals taking their first leap into entrepreneurship.

### **Demo Days, Technical Assistance, & Alumni Resource Center:**

Opportunities to connect with investors, network with peers, and expand learning beyond our curriculum.

# IMPACT ACCELERATORS

- Dedicated mentors with industry expertise
- Curricular emphasis on financials and revenue
- Facilitated peer learning and relationship building

Our signature, 8-week program helps entrepreneurs take tangible actions to move their ventures forward, whether that means locking in a key partnership, expanding into new markets, or securing the right kind of early-stage capital.

The program offers a supportive space for entrepreneurs to test and refine their ideas, receive personalized mentorship from experts who reflect their own lived experiences, and access the resources required to grow and sustain their ventures.

## Notable Venture Focus Areas in 2025

Workforce Development

Social Determinants of Health

Environmental Sustainability



DEEPENING IMPACT

# Retail Brand Accelerators

Offered in partnership with the **Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity** and the **Washington Area Community Foundation**, SEED SPOT's Retail Brand Accelerator prepares underrepresented founders to breakthrough and succeed in mass retail. Over the long-term, we aim to leverage the power of business ownership to drive economic mobility both at the individual and community level.



## Program Outcomes

SEED SPOT's Retail Brand Accelerators build skills essential to achieving product placement in the nation's top retailers. **In 2025, our ventures pitched to and earned placements in leading retailers including:**



SEPHORA



## Nonprofit Capacity Building

### Unprecedented Support

By partnering with 92NY to support community-driven nonprofit leaders, SEED SPOT has been able to provide immense amounts of interpersonal and monetary assistance:

- ***Board Member Coaching***
- ***3 Year Strategic Plan***
- ***\$5000 Unrestricted Grant***
- ***Opportunity to Pitch to NYC Philanthropists***

**Meet the cohort!**



# EXPANDING ACCESS



## STARTUP SPRING TRAINING

- Fun, gamified, community-oriented small business event series
- \$50,000 in participation-based micro-grants deployed to 100 small business each year
- Opportunities for meaningful ecosystem collaboration

Startup Spring Training is a multi-week program that provides small business owners and independent vendors with business training, direct mentorship, and over **100 participation-based micro-grants**. Through our partnership with Chicanos Por La Causa, this program serves nearly **300 businesses** each year, and includes a Spanish-language track. In 2025, we delivered **112 mentorship sessions** and **50 educational workshops** at no cost to Arizona entrepreneurs.

## LAUNCH CAMPS

- Curricular frameworks for organizing and iterating ideas
- Networking opportunities for participants and mentors

Designed for founders at the earliest stages of their entrepreneurial journey, Launch Camps are multi-day programs that offer a structured pathway to transform ideas into thriving, impact-driven businesses.

# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

## Nationwide Impact in 2025

We currently offer youth programming in **7 states**, including Texas, Minnesota, Washington. These in-person experiences teach essential workplace skills while building the strength of student resumes. In 2025, we accomplished the following:

196

Students served

72%

Students of color

13

Students matched with paid  
internships

SEED SPOT's Youth Entrepreneurship Program, supported by the **NBA Foundation** and the **Best Buy Foundation**, is an out-of-school program empowering underrepresented youth across the US to explore entrepreneurship. Through project-based learning, expert mentorship, and paid internship experiences, participants build the skills, confidence, and professional networks needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy. Whether or not they chose entrepreneurship as a career pathway, participants in the program walk away with the mindsets and tools to succeed.





## SUPPORTING ALUMNI

### PITCH EVENTS

- Large-scale community showcase events (online or in-person)
- Ecosystem-centric with opportunities for prize sponsorships

SEED SPOT does pitch competitions differently. At Demo Days, each audience member's vote has a dollar value, meaning that every founder who receives a vote also receives a cash grant. These events build the foundation for partnerships and serve as source of regular coaching. In 2025 Demo Days were sponsored by our partners at EY.

### EVERGREEN ALUMNI COMMUNITY

SEED SPOT's Alumni Resource Center is an 11-year-strong online community. Alumni connect and grow through a dedicated Slack channel and can access discounts on services like web design and cloud computing.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Free workshops open to participants and alumni
- Taught by subject matter experts
- Interactive sessions with useful take-away resources

SEED SPOT's technical assistance sessions match small groups of ventures with experts in topics like marketing, fulfillment, and fundraising. In 2025, we served over 160 entrepreneurs through these workshops.

# National Mentor Network

Mentorship is the cornerstone of SEED SPOT's programs. With a self-sustaining network of more than **600 expert mentors** across the nation, our entrepreneurs gain access to investment, coaching, and connections that continue beyond graduation. In addition to our in-house network, we engage employees from partner organizations—such as **EY** and **Yelp**—to serve as mentors. Through this programming, we create transformative experiences that empower both mentors and founders to grow together.



## Resilient Relationships

At SEED SPOT, mentors commit to the success of their entrepreneurs. Relationships are strong and often last beyond the conclusion of programs.

4 Hours

Time participants spend with their hand-selected mentor during the program

Number of total mentors each participant meets

8-9





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# OUR NETWORK

# OUR TEAM



**Astrid Arias**  
Director of Program Management



**Maddy Chong**  
Senior Operations Manager



**Sherrod Crum**  
Program Manager



**Tristan Gandolfi**  
Vice President of Programs



**Lauren McDanell**  
Vice President of Strategy and Growth



**Shannon McGhee**  
Incoming CEO



**Regina Molina**  
Grant Writer



**Linda Norquist**  
Marketing and Recruitment Manager



**Jamie Rodriguez**  
Senior Communications Associate



**Drew Shaw**  
Program Facilitator



**Sandra Waithaka**  
Mentorship Program Manager



**Miranda Williamson**  
Director of Recruitment

# OUR BOARD



**Sentari Minor**  
*Board Chair*  
Chief of Staff & Head of  
Investor Relations,  
evolved MD



**Savannah Onwochei**  
*Board Secretary*  
Product Marketing  
Manager, Facebook  
(Meta)



**Erin O'Shea**  
*Board Treasurer*  
Treasurer,  
Financial Consultant,  
Brillect



**Janine-Davison**  
Senior Leader,  
Intel Corp.



**John Gaylord**  
Partner,  
Ernst & Young



**Russell Goldstein**  
U.S. Trust, Bank of  
America Private Wealth  
Management



**Zach Leverenz**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Private Family Office



**Shaun Mayo**  
Chief People Officer,  
Arizona Cardinals



**Brian Hill**  
Executive Director,  
Phoenix Fashion Week



**Courtney Klein**  
SEED SPOT Co-founder  
Co-founder, All One Thing



**Joronda Montaño**  
SEED SPOT Alumnus;  
Prevention and Wellness  
Consultant



**Rashad Moore**  
Managing Partner,  
G11 Technology Partners



**Nahla Salem**  
Head of Product,  
Haven Energy

# OUR CHAMPIONS

## The SEED SPOT 500

Individuals who donate \$500 or more per year to support entrepreneurship access and education.

Brian Hill  
C'pher Gresham and Morganne Rosenhaus  
Cheryl Sadolfo  
Corinn and Matt Carter  
Courtney Klein  
CP Herg  
Dan Tyre  
Darrell Kidd  
Duane and Makenzie Rollins  
Erin O'Shea  
Gabriel Ramirez  
Janene Davison  
John Gaylord

Joronda Montaño  
Kim and Mark McDanell  
Lauren McDanell and Carlos Blancarte  
Mahesh Vinayagam  
Nahla Salem  
Rashad Moore  
Regina Molina  
Russell Goldstein  
Savannah Onwoch ei  
Sentari Minor  
Shaun Mayo  
Tara Bethell  
Timothy Bidwill  
Zach and Kathleen Leverenz



Platinum Transparency 2025

Candid.





# SUPPORT RESILIENCE

SEED SPOT, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, relies on supporters like you to equip underrepresented, impact-driven entrepreneurs with the mentorship, education, and resources they need to succeed.



Join us in ensuring that entrepreneurs everywhere have the support they need to thrive. Learn more about how you can get involved as a mentor at [seedspot.org/mentors](https://seedspot.org/mentors) or donate at [seedspot.org/donate](https://seedspot.org/donate).

