





Center for Financial Empowerment

Impact Report 2025

Celebrating
20
Years of Impact

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Report of the Chair and Executive Director

As we celebrate the **20th anniversary** of the Center for Financial Empowerment (CFE), we are proud to reflect on a year of meaningful growth and impact in 2025. Through strong partnerships and a shared commitment to financial inclusion, we expanded our reach and deepened our impact across the communities we serve.

Our work remained grounded in a deep commitment to youth—expanding access to equitable financial education through partnerships with local schools, community organizations, legislative leaders, and the generous support of our donors. Together, we are inspiring our communities to come together, support one another, and invest in brighter futures. From delivering 102 financial education workshops and hosting 39 Mad City Money events, to reaching over 13,000 youth and awarding $22,000 in scholarships, we continue to create opportunities that build confidence, knowledge, and long-term stability.

Among these accomplishments, we are especially proud to support youth in foster care—reaching over 400 young people through education and equitable access to financial services through our community partnerships across California and Nevada.

This progress reflects the dedication of our team, partners, donors, and supporters who bring this mission to life every day. Together, we are opening doors and creating pathways to stronger financial futures for the individuals, families, and communities we serve.



M. Kenji Coleman
Board Chair



Diana Cervantes
Executive Director

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What We Do

The Center for Financial Empowerment takes a holistic approach to empowering youth with the tools and opportunities to build financial confidence and long-term stability. Through our programs, teens develop practical money management skills and learn to make informed decisions about affordable financial services—turning knowledge into real-life action.

Financial education comes to life through classroom instruction and hands-on learning. A signature experience, Mad City Money immerses students in a real-world simulation where they make financial decisions, manage budgets, and navigate everyday expenses. Take-home resources encourage shared learning and strengthen financial knowledge at home. Without these programs, many students would lack access to critical money management skills and experiences—and feedback shows they're making a real difference in their confidence and financial capability.

Through our partnership with Rize Credit Union, participants gain early access to checking and savings accounts, building financial habits and confidence that support them for life.

We're not only equipping youth with knowledge—we're fostering the confidence and independence they need to shape their own futures and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

We're truly changing the lives of the youth in our local communities.

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Scholarships

The Center for Financial Empowerment proudly awards college scholarships to young adults who demonstrate determination, community involvement, and a strong commitment to building a brighter future. These students represent the talent, resilience, and potential within the communities we serve.

Made possible through the generosity of Rize Credit Union team members who contribute through voluntary payroll donations, these scholarships open doors to higher education, career pathways, and skill-building opportunities. This strong partnership between CFE and Rize Credit Union reflects a shared belief in expanding access and creating a fair and equal shot at opportunities for success. At its heart, this program is about empowerment coming together to invest in the next generation, uplift aspirations, and support young leaders as they pursue their goals and shape the future.



"This scholarship will bring me one step closer to giving back, one step closer to helping other families like mine build lasting financial stability. "

-Angie Alfaro Cabezas
2025 Scholarship Recipient



"Investing in our youth creates a ripple effect that strengthens families and entire communities."

-Oscar Avila
Scholarship Donor



"From what I've seen, the impact is both immediate and lasting—it supports individuals in the moment while creating meaningful opportunities for the future."

-Lizbeth Ellerbracke
Scholarship Donor

Investing in Education, Inspiring Futures

$22,000
Awarded



13
Scholarship recipients

Scholarship recipients plan to attend the following colleges and universities

- Columbia University
- Harvard University
- University of California Los Angeles
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of California, Irvine
- University of Southern California
- California State University, Los Angeles
- Northeastern University
- Pasadena City College
- California Baptist University
- Grand Canyon University
- UC Riverside
- Citrus College

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Mad City Money

Mad City Money is a hands-on financial education simulation that places teens in a real-world scenario where they assume an adult identity with a job, income, and financial responsibilities. Most, if not all, participants for the first time must make budgeting decisions across key life categories such as housing, transportation, food, clothing, and childcare while staying within a set monthly income.

The experience also introduces unexpected expenses and financial “surprises” to mirror real-life challenges and decision-making. Through this interactive exercise, students learn how everyday choices impact their budget and develop practical money management skills they can apply in the future. Participants are better prepared to live independently and make strong financial decisions that impact opportunity, stability, and long-term well-being.

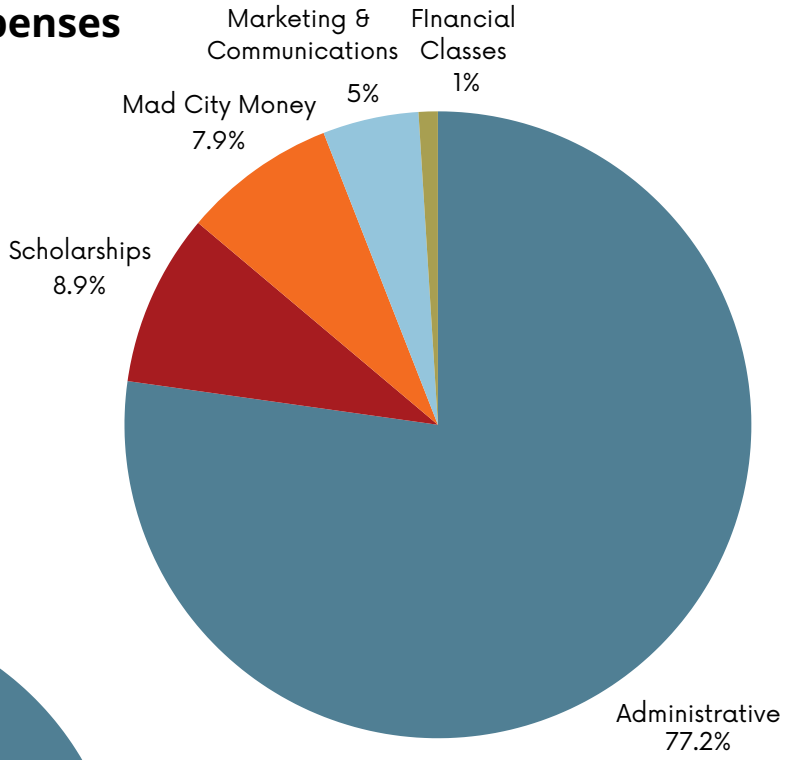


Financials

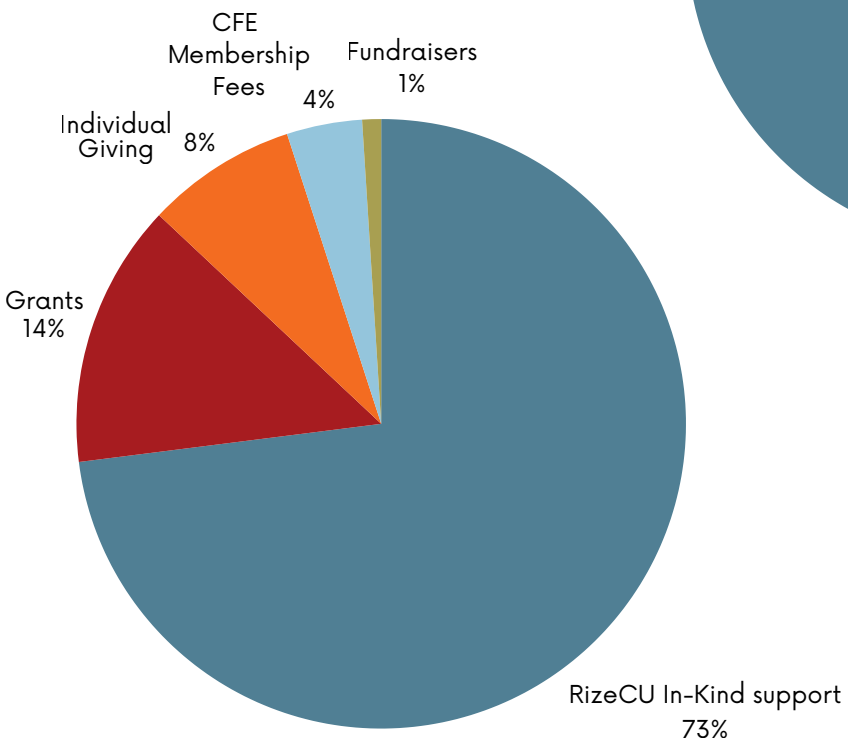
The need for youth financial education remains urgent, and our goal is to continue offering our programs at no cost to the high schools and community organizations we serve. This work is made possible through the generous support of Rize Credit Union, our corporate partners, grant funding, and individual donors.

We extend our sincere thanks to the individuals and organizations who demonstrated their commitment in 2025, helping the CFE expand access to meaningful financial education for young people.

Total Expenses



Total Revenue



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Many thanks for your ongoing support of youth financial empowerment!

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Rize Credit Union, its Board of Directors, executives, team members, donors, and community partners for 20 years of commitment and support.

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M. Kenji Coleman, Chair
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