

MLK DREAM RUN 2025 IMPACT REPORT

#STRENGTHENINGCOMMUNITIES



MLK Dream Run Weekend Celebration | September 20–21, 2025
Portland, Oregon | Portland Community College – Cascade Campus
Presented by: Soul District Business Association (SDBA)



IMPACT REPORT

In 2025, the MLK Dream Run was more than a race — it was a community movement built on health, joy, culture, and economic reinvestment. Under this year's theme, Strengthening Our Communities, we united youth, families, athletes, sponsors, volunteers, vendors, and community-based partners to activate wellness and shared prosperity in Portland's historic Soul District.

"WE ARE CAUGHT IN AN INESCAPABLE NETWORK OF MUTUALITY, TIED IN A SINGLE GARMENT OF DESTINY. WHATEVER AFFECTS ONE DIRECTLY, AFFECTS ALL INDIRECTLY."

— DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Identity Statement (Historic Tie + Inclusive Service Model)

In 2025, the MLK Dream Run was more than a race — it was a community movement built on health, joy, culture, and economic reinvestment. Under this year's theme, Strengthening Our Communities, we united youth, families, athletes, sponsors, volunteers, vendors, and community-based partners to activate wellness and shared prosperity in Portland's historic Soul District.

Cover Closing Statement

Every mile strengthened more than bodies — it strengthened relationships, visibility, economic circulation, and long-term community power.

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EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

The MLK Dream Run exists at the intersection of culture, wellness, and economic justice. In a time when many communities are forced to choose between health resources and financial survival, the Dream Run demonstrates a different reality: wellness can be collective, culturally grounded, joyful — and economically meaningful.

WHY WE RUN

“Strengthening our communities isn’t just a theme—it’s a mandate. We’re not running for medals. We’re running to reclaim what was taken. To invest where others divested... This is about legacy, justice, and the power of showing up for each other.” — *John Washington, Executive Director, SDBA*

HISTORIC SOUL DISTRICT

The Soul District is not simply a corridor — it is a living archive of Black entrepreneurship, community organizing, and resilience. The MLK Dream Run ensures this corridor remains visible, valued, and invested in through public celebration and direct economic circulation.



CLOSING IMPACT

The MLK Dream Run is not a “one weekend” event. It is an annual engine that fuels year-round entrepreneurship programs, youth development, and community leadership — ensuring our voices remain present and heard in decisions shaping Portland, Multnomah County, and Oregon.

KEY IMPACT STATS AT A GLANCE



Total Participants: **1,204**

Total Funds Raised: **\$147,114.36**

Sponsors: **48**

Teams Registered: **58**

Team Participants: **334**

Volunteers: **135**

Volunteer Hours: **385+**

Paid Youth Entrepreneurs: **10**

Cities: **21**

States: **21**

Countries: **3**

These numbers reflect more than attendance — they represent community trust, coalition strength, sponsor alignment, and an increasing demand for culturally grounded wellness and entrepreneurship investment.

The Dream Run continues to grow because it delivers measurable outcomes: stronger wellness culture, stronger small business activation, stronger youth pathways, and stronger community voice.

THE DREAM RUN WEEKEND EXPERIENCE

The MLK Dream Run is designed as a two-day celebration of movement, community wellness, small business visibility, youth inspiration, and neighborhood pride.

Saturday: Kickoff Celebration (10 AM – 5 PM)

Pre-packet pickup & onsite registration • Free Kids' Race (ages 9 & under) to inspire the next generation • Live music and entertainment • Soulful Vendor Village (small businesses, youth entrepreneurs, community partners) • Wellness forum & fitness activities for all ages • Business, Health & Innovation Zone (resources and opportunities) • Nike Shakeout Run + Onsite Wellness Activation + Cheer Zone • EV Ride & Drive experience + clean energy education • Community giveaways, including Alaska Airlines prize incentives

Sunday: Race Day (7 AM – 12 PM)

USATF-sanctioned 5K / 10K / 15K races through the historic Soul District • Custom event T-shirts, swag bags, and race-day refreshments • Raffle tickets and prizes • Alaska Airlines airfare prizes for select top finishers and giveaway winners



By building a two-day experience — not just a race — the Dream Run strengthens community cohesion, increases business engagement, expands wellness access, and builds momentum around the Soul District as a place worthy of continued investment.

RACE PARTICIPANTS + DEMOGRAPHICS SNAPSHOT

Participation is not just a number — it is proof of belonging. The MLK Dream Run is designed as a culturally grounded wellness event where movement becomes community, visibility becomes power, and the Soul District becomes a living space of pride, health, and economic reinvestment. It welcomes long-time runners, first-time walkers, families, elders showing up for legacy, and teams representing workplaces, schools, and organizations across the region.

PARTICIPATION BY RACE DIS- TANCE:

5K: 625
10K: 289
15K: 191
KIDS: 99

**TOTAL
PARTICIPANTS:
1,204**

TEAM / GROUP PARTICIPATION IMPACT

A major indicator of growth and community ownership in 2025 was the strength of team participation. Teams represented workplaces, families, agencies, and community organizations — turning race registration into a visible demonstration of unity and collective wellness.

Key Team Stats: 58 teams registered – 334 participants registered as part of teams

Team-based participation strengthens communities by turning wellness into shared culture — deepening relationships, increasing accountability, and expanding the Dream Run's reach through group leadership.



AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

Under 18: 133 (11.43%) Ages 40–49: 292 (23.37%)
Ages 18–29: 195 (16.75%) Ages 50–64: 176 (15.12%)
Ages 30–39: 380 (30.93%) Over 65: 28 (2.41%)

GENDER PARTICIPATION BY DISTANCE

5K (Total 625)

Male: 239 (38.24%)
Female: 330 (52.80%)
Non-Binary: 11 (1.76%)
Unknown: 45 (7.20%)

10K (Total 289)

Male: 121 (41.87%)
Female: 151 (52.25%)
Non-Binary: 3 (1.04%)
Unknown: 14 (4.84%)

15K (Total 191)

Male: 83 (43.46%)
Female: 92 (48.17%)
Non-Binary: 3 (1.57%)
Unknown: 13 (6.81%)

Kids Race (Total 99)

Male: 52 (52.53%)
Female: 46 (46.46%)
Non-Binary: 1 (1.01%)

The 2025 MLK Dream Run strengthened communities through shared movement — proving that health equity can be activated through culturally rooted experiences that unify people across age, background, identity, and ability. In the spirit of Dr. King’s belief in shared humanity, the Dream Run continues to bring people together across backgrounds to run, volunteer, support, and invest in Portland’s future.

RACE RESULTS + OVERALL FASTEST FINISHERS (ALASKA AIRLINES HIGHLIGHT)

We honor athletic excellence as part of community pride. Our winners reflect discipline, preparation, and inspiration — showing what’s possible when wellness is centered in community. The Dream Run celebrates the fastest finishers while recognizing that every participant strengthens the fabric of our collective health and unity.

2025 Overall Fastest — 5K

Overall 1st Place: Lincoln Eames (M, 13) – Portland, OR

Time: 17:35 | Pace: 5:40

Overall Fastest Female: Jessie Rubin (F, 32) – Portland, OR

Time: 17:46 | Pace: 5:43

2025 Overall Fastest — 10K

Overall 1st Place: Jonathan Carmin (M, 24) – Portland, OR

Time: 32:13 | Pace: 5:11

Overall Fastest Female: Aoibhe Richardson (F, 28) – Bend, OR

Time: 35:00 | Pace: 5:38

2025 Overall Fastest — 15K

Overall 1st Place: Alex Slenning (M, 25) – Portland, OR

Time: 50:38 | Pace: 5:26

Overall Fastest Female: Ashley Althaus (F, 38) – Portland, OR

Time: 56:07 | Pace: 6:01



ALASKA AIRLINES WINNER HIGHLIGHT)

A special thank you to Alaska Airlines for strengthening the Dream Run experience through prize support, including round-trip airfare incentives that increased participation excitement and expanded community celebration. In-kind contributions like Alaska Airlines prize support strengthen communities by increasing access, increasing joy, and elevating participant experience — turning a wellness event into a meaningful community celebration.

Celebrating winners strengthens communities by honoring achievement publicly — and inspiring youth, families, and first-time participants to build confidence through movement, discipline, and shared pride.

HEALTH & WELL- NESS

COMMUNITY FOCUSED FITNESS

The Dream Run is a culturally responsive wellness activation, not just a sporting event. It creates access to movement, belonging, and positive health behavior through joy, visibility, and celebration in public space.

- Increased physical activity across all ages
- Reduced isolation through social connection
- Positive neighborhood activation and corridor pride
- Family health traditions and youth wellness identity-building

The Dream Run strengthens communities by making wellness a shared standard — where health is accessible, celebrated, and rooted in community pride.

VOLUNTEER IMPACT (INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHICS + TEAMS CONNECTION)

Volunteers are the infrastructure of community care. Every volunteer hour represents shared ownership of the Dream Run’s mission — and turns community pride into operational excellence. In 2025, volunteer support reflected deep community investment, with groups showing up not just as helpers, but as organized teams committed to wellness, unity, and service.

Volunteer Groups & Community Leadership

We extend special gratitude to volunteer groups who supported race weekend operations and helped build a culture of teamwork, responsibility, and shared celebration, including:

- *Go The Distance Clean and Sober Run Club*
- *Black Men & Women in Training*
- *University of Portland Women’s Rowing Team*

These groups contributed to a stronger race weekend through coordinated service, positive energy, and visible leadership.

Team Engagement + Volunteer Leadership Connection

Teams didn’t just participate — they mobilized. Team captains and group organizers helped recruit runners, strengthen volunteer turnout, and improve race-day coordination through shared leadership. When teams volunteer and run together, they strengthen communities twice — through visible participation and behind-the-scenes service that makes collective wellness possible.

2025 VOLUNTEER SERVICE

135 volunteers

Gender:

Female: 78

Male: 54

Unknown: 3

Race/Ethnicity:

Caucasian: 56

African American: 41

Hispanic: 10

Asian: 9

Two or More Races: 9

Native American: 3

Pacific Islander: 1

“Human”: 13

385+ volunteer hours

Volunteer leadership strengthens communities by building service culture, shared responsibility, and real operational capacity for community-driven events. Through organized volunteer groups and individual community members, the 2025 MLK Dream Run demonstrated that wellness and community care are strongest when people show up for one another — together.

VENDOR & MARKETPLACE IMPACT

The vendor marketplace is not an add-on — it is an economic development strategy that turns race weekend into direct community investment.

VENDOR PARTICIPATION

Total Vendors: 63

The vendor village strengthens communities by keeping dollars circulating locally and increasing visibility for entrepreneurs in an environment where customers are ready to buy, connect, and return.



SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTING & LOCAL ECONOMIC SPEND

The MLK Dream Run is not only a wellness event — it is an intentional economic development strategy. In 2025, our operational model prioritized reinvesting event dollars into local small businesses, strengthening the Soul District economy while building real capacity for community-based entrepreneurs.

23 Small Businesses Contracted (2025)

To successfully deliver race weekend operations, the Soul District Business Association contracted with a total of 23 small businesses and independent contractors, many of which are Black-owned and BIPOC-owned local firms, providing paid opportunities across event safety, entertainment, logistics, hospitality, media, and production. Examples of contracted businesses include:

Ace Security (event safety / security operations) • **Espresso2U** (hospitality / vendor support) • **Keller Entertainment** (live entertainment / event experience) • **Dope Creative** (creative services and media support)

By contracting locally, the MLK Dream Run strengthens communities beyond the finish line — building wealth, increasing business visibility, and ensuring the event creates meaningful economic opportunity for the same community it celebrates.



YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS + RACE IMPACT

Youth are not spectators at the MLK Dream Run — they are future leaders. The Dream Run connects wellness to confidence and confidence to opportunity.

Youth Participation

Kids Race Participants: 99 (ages 9 and under)

Nike played a critical role in strengthening youth participation and visibility through race weekend activation and wellness-centered support. Nike's presence helped elevate the Kids Race as a celebration of youth health, confidence, and community pride, ensuring young participants felt seen, valued, and inspired.

Youth Workforce + Entrepreneurship Pathway

10 paid youth entrepreneurs (ages 16–24) supported through operations roles and leadership experience

The Dream Run strengthens communities by building youth identity, leadership, and opportunity, ensuring the next generation sees themselves as capable, connected, and empowered.

SPONSOR RECOGNITION / FUNDRAISING + IN-KIND SUPPORT

Sponsors fuel more than an event — they fund outcomes. Sponsorship ensures the Dream Run remains culturally rooted, inclusive, high-quality, and accessible, while also strengthening year-round entrepreneurship and youth development programs led by SDBA.

2025 Fundraising Total: \$147,114.36 Raised

2025 Sponsors: 48 sponsors

In-Kind Contributions & Community Giveaways

In-kind support strengthened participant experience and increased accessibility through giveaways, wellness incentives, and meaningful celebration, including:

- Alaska Airlines prize support, including round-trip ticket incentives
- Nike leadership & participant experience support (gear, activation, wellness presence)
- Soul District small businesses raffle prizes and community giveaways
- Stages Northwest, event experience enhancements



SPONSOR VOICES

“At Alaska Airlines, providing care is a cornerstone of what we do... that commitment to care extends beyond our guests; we see it as our responsibility to bring care to the communities we serve... creating opportunities for young people.”

— Harry Cheema, Alaska Airlines

“We are proud to partner with the Soul District Business Association to host the MLK Dream Run in support of small businesses and youth entrepreneurship... educating the next generation of change-makers and fostering partnerships that uplift our community.”

— Dr. Adrien Bennings, President, Portland Community College

Sponsor investment strengthens communities by expanding wellness access, increasing youth opportunities, and funding year-round entrepreneurship outcomes.

MLK DREAM RUN 2025

SPONSORS

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SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Our sponsors represent shared values: wellness, equity, community wealth-building, and long-term opportunity. *Thank you for strengthening our communities.*



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YEAR-ROUND IMPACT: SDBA PROGRAMS (2025 TAP OUTCOMES)

Year-Round Impact: Small Business & Youth Programs

Dream Run weekend is the celebration — year-round programs are the transformation. Proceeds from the MLK Dream Run directly support the Soul District Business Association’s entrepreneurship ecosystem, rooted in Portland’s historic Soul District and designed to strengthen inclusive prosperity across Black, BIPOC, and all small business communities who are building, hiring, and serving locally.

2025 TAP Impact Highlights (Verified Program Metrics)

In 2025, SDBA delivered measurable outcomes through our Technical Assistance Program (TAP) and culturally responsive small business support services, including:

1:1 Advising Delivered by SDBA Staff

- 96 business owners supported
- 930 one-on-one advising sessions delivered
- 2,827 total coaching hours delivered

This reflects deep, long-term coaching focused on business stability, growth planning, compliance, marketing, budgeting, and operational readiness.

1:1 Advising Delivered by Consultants / Contractors

- 113 business owners supported
- 20 sessions delivered
- 161 total hours delivered

Contractor support expanded specialized expertise and increased access to technical services for entrepreneurs.

Cohorts / Classes / Workshops

- 195 entrepreneurs participated
- 53 cohort/class sessions delivered
- 332.5 total training hours delivered

These learning spaces strengthened business fundamentals while building peer networks, accountability, and confidence among entrepreneurs.

CONTINUED...

Key Outcomes: Referrals & Opportunity Navigation

SDBA helped small businesses access the broader support ecosystem through:

- 212 referrals to partner TA providers, Business Oregon programs, and additional resource networks

This highlights SDBA's role not only as a service provider — but as a connector, navigator, and advocate helping entrepreneurs move from isolation to opportunity.

Program Areas Strengthened by Dream Run Funding

MLK Dream Run proceeds strengthen SDBA's year-round entrepreneurship work by supporting:

- One-on-one business coaching and stabilization support
- Cohort workshops and leadership-based business learning
- Digital navigation + marketing systems support
- Procurement readiness + compliance guidance
- Corridor-based business visibility, storytelling, and customer growth
- Youth internships, youth leadership, and entrepreneurship exposure pathways

The MLK Dream Run strengthens communities beyond race weekend by converting participation, sponsorship, and celebration into year-round economic outcomes: coaching hours delivered, entrepreneurs supported, trainings completed, and expanded access to opportunity. This is how the Dream Run becomes legacy in action, supporting the people and businesses shaping the future of Portland's historic Soul District.



MLK DREAM RUN

SAVE THE DATE

The MLK Dream Run is a living example of equity in action, community-designed, culturally rooted, inclusive, and future-focused. It honors the Soul District's historical legacy while building pathways for prosperity and wellness.

Thank you for making 2025 a year of stronger participation, stronger partnerships, and stronger reinvestment. Together, we strengthened our communities — one mile, one business, one youth leader, one shared commitment at a time.

Save the Date: MLK Dream Run Weekend Celebration September 19 -20, 2026

Theme: Together We Win!

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